

SIR NORMAN CHESTER CENTRE FOR FOOTBALL RESEARCH**Women and Football****Fact Sheet No. 5****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 'The cultures of sport in Britain have been distinctively male, rooted in masculine values and patriarchal exclusiveness' (Whannel, 1991, p31). Football in Britain is irrevocably linked to notions of masculinity. It is still widely regarded as a 'man's game' in which women are still seen as marginal, both as spectators or as players.
- 1.2 However this is beginning to change. The number of women players in Britain is on the increase and women's teams and leagues are being developed all over the country. More women are also becoming administrators and match officials to further enhance the number of women 'in the game'. The formation of the first Women's National League in 1991 was a watershed, as was the rescinding of the FA ban on mixed football for under 11s in schools in the same year. Yet, gendered attitudes are still prevalent. The idea that women cannot and should not be actively involved in football is still widespread, although it has been consistently challenged now by the game's governing body in England.

2. GENDER AND SPORT: STEREOTYPES?

- 2.1 According to Archer and Macdonald (*Leisure Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3) sport is seen as 'traditionally a masculine preserve' or 'masculine or suitable for both sexes'. Some sports are deemed more 'feminine' and therefore historically more acceptable for women, such as tennis, swimming and ice skating. This idea is reinforced by the images put forward of women in sport. If a woman participates in a suitably non-contact 'feminine' sport, such as netball or gymnastics, then this does not transgress accepted gender norms. If a woman participates in a defined 'masculine' sport, such as rugby or football, then she is deemed as having, or seeking out, 'masculine' attributes and as contravening her 'natural' gender identity. Men's normative heterosexual gender identities are confirmed by their involvement in sport. Women's identity is *challenged* by sporting prowess. As Hargreaves (2000: 135) puts it: 'Because the muscularity and power invested in female sporting bodies inverts the myth of gender by rendering women apparently less 'feminine' and more 'masculine', sportswomen have feared being labelled as lesbians.' As Hargreaves goes on to point out, lesbians themselves face discrimination and barriers in sport, which many have bravely contested.
- 2.2 *Media portrayals* of women who play sport help to accentuate this sort of division. Articles on Katarina Witt, the former East German ice-skater, and Anna Kournikova, the tennis star, portray them as 'pin-up girls' who are appreciated more for their looks and 'celebrity' status than their sporting ability. Most women rugby or football players, by way of contrast, are seen as somehow 'unfeminine' and ill-advised to take up the sport. Some sports are, therefore, deemed appropriate and acceptable and other sports are simply not. This is not helped by inconsistent attitudes within the school system. Whilst some girls are allowed to play rugby and football, others are not because such sports are deemed by some teachers and administrators to be 'unsuitable' for girls. In other instances, girls can miss out on involvement in sport because teachers lack coaching experience or girls lack suitable role models.
- 2.3 Media descriptions also play a major role in the overly-narrow associations of gender and sport. On the one hand, women athletes are often described using discourses which locate them safely in their traditional domestic mode e.g. athlete, 'Joyce Smith, mother and housewife, was last week winding down her training' (quoted in Doust, 1982), while men are celebrated and turned into national heroes

when they do well in sport. In fact, male sports stars are often *disconnected* from their families, because this domesticated context somehow *diminishes* their manly, sporting status. Recently David Beckham has been publicly located more in terms of his family commitments - but then Beckham is also married to a female celebrity (Whannel, 2001; Burchill, 2001).

- 2.4 Perhaps, there will be a new breed of female sporting star in Britain as gender roles are now becoming rather less fixed? Women are moving out of the home and into work and public office – though progress in the latter is still very slow. More equality for females – in education, work and sport – is more solidly on the agenda today. Even so, it is difficult to think of more than a handful of authentic British female sports stars: Denise Lewis and Paula Ratcliffe in athletics, perhaps; young football players, such as Rachel Brown and Kelly Smith, currently on scholarships in the United States are hopefuls but are little known in England outside of female football circles.
- 2.5 In the late-modern era, women are encouraged more to be physically fit and to benefit from exercise in health terms and in order to gain equality and freedom of action (although the counter argument could be made that what many women are actually doing is striving to make themselves more desirable to men). A focus on the body and body discipline has opened up health clubs and exercise to a large number of females today. Sheila Scraton in 'Images of Femininity and the Teaching of Girls Physical Education' (1986) states that:

'Women's PE remains caught in a double bind. On the one hand it challenges many traditional images of femininity by encouraging physical activity and increased participation in the physical leisure pursuits. On the other hand it remains locked within the traditions and assumptions which differentiate between girls and boys, women and men' (Scraton, 1986: 88).

In a later article, Scraton goes on to point out how the involvement of boys in sport at school is a way of asserting their opposition to the disciplines and cultures of formal education. Boys who are good at sport have status among their peer group – even if they perform poorly in academic work. For girls, getting involved in school sport – with its de-sexualised sportswear and discipline and 'masculine' image – seems to be 'giving in' to school. Girls are more likely to resist school discipline by *accentuating* their femininity and their adult-ness, through the wearing make-up and risqué clothes – the antithesis to school sport. For most girls there is no 'street' credibility in sporting success.

- 2.6 Therefore, the role of schools seems pivotal to the development of women's sport and the whole idea of sports being gender based. Scraton (1982) quotes a PE adviser who says, in an extremely essentialised way: 'Lets face it, boys have far more strength, speed, daring. Women are much more the devious species. We need to play the game to suit our abilities'.

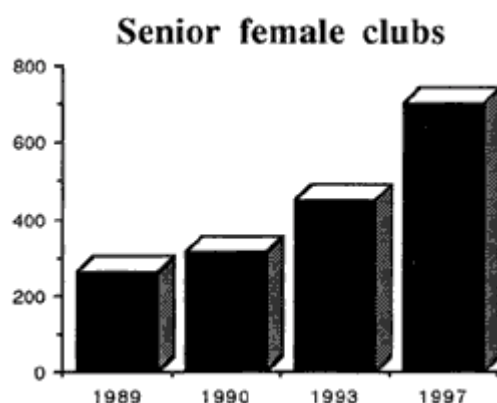
3. THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN WOMEN'S GAME

- 3.1 Women's football in England is not a new sport. As early as 1895, a representative football match between northern and southern women's teams was recorded in London (See Williams and Woodhouse, 1991). However, in 1902 the FA Council forbade its member teams from playing against 'lady teams' and, without official encouragement and support, women's football floundered until the First World War, when women's roles started to change and they took on jobs and responsibilities previously fulfilled by men. The new women's teams in wartime were based around factories and were usually formed to raise money for War charities. The most successful team was Dick Kerr's Ladies from Preston - Dick Kerr's being the munitions factory that the female players worked for. By the end of the War, the numbers of teams had increased across the country and they attracted huge crowds in some cases, such as on Boxing Day 1920 when 53,000 people were reported to have watched Dick Kerr's vs. St Helen's Ladies at Goodison Park. (see Newsome, 1994).

- 3.2 By the 1920s, women's football in England was attracting more interest and bigger crowds, - in some cases bigger crowds than low ranking men's matches , a situation the FA found difficult to accept. Therefore, in December 1921, the FA banned women from playing football on Football League grounds on the premise that the money which had been raised for War charities was actually being used for other purposes. However, the true sentiment of the ban was found in the FA's statement that it was of the: `strong opinion that the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and should not be encouraged.' The FA summarily directed member clubs not to allow their grounds to be used for women's games.
- 3.3 This body blow effectively ended the War-time boom in women's football in England. Women continued to play football between the wars but there was no league structure and no-where for women to change on public parks. Matches were infrequent and looked on (by men) as a bit of a joke. This was until there was a resurgence of interest in the women's game from 1966 produced by the national enthusiasm following England's World Cup triumph. The World Cup was a main spur to football being seen by younger females both as a serious sport and one to which women should have more access. The modern pioneers of the women's game – people such Sue Lopez of Southampton Ladies and England – were inspired to play the game by the World Cup triumph, and by the conscious attempt by television to make the game accessible to women. 1969 saw the foundation of the Women's FA and this was followed in 1972, under pressure from UEFA, by the lifting of the FA ban on women playing on Football League grounds in England.

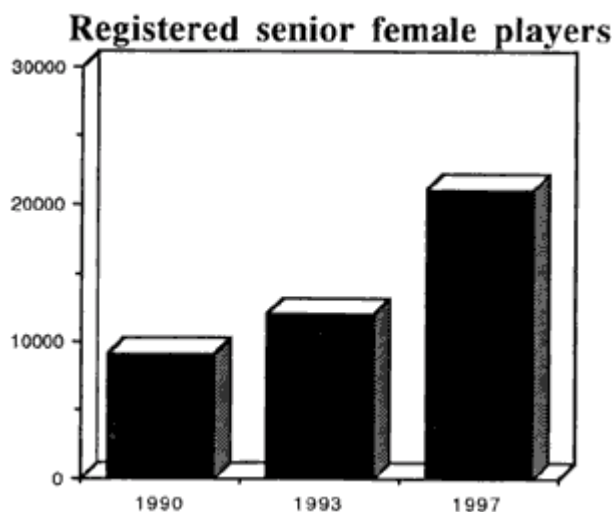
4. WOMEN'S FOOTBALL - AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

- 4.1 Since the early 1970s, there has been a gradual increase in the numbers of women players in England.. By 1989, there were 263 women's clubs and around 7,000 players, in 1990, 314 and 9,000 registered players and the figure for 1992/3 was 450 with 12,000 registered players (figures from the Women's Football Association). The figures for the 1997/98 season are 1000 girls teams, with 20,000 players and 700 women's teams with 14,000 players, giving us a figure of 1700 teams with 34,000 registered players, all told (figures from the FA.). It has also been estimated that up to 215,000 women played football in the UK in the late 1990s (Boyle, 1998) Figure 1 shows the increasing number of women's football teams in Britain and Figure 2 the increase in the number of registered players.



- 4.2 However, in comparison to continental Europe and America, these figures are still very low. In Norway, a country with a population one-eighth the size of England, there were 44,000 registered female players in 1993 - more female than male players and this figure rose to 60,000 in 1997 (figures from the Norwegian FA). In Germany, participation rates are higher still, with approximately half a million female players nationwide (figures from the German FA). Italy also provides a good marker for the British female game with a semi-professional league that has been in operation since the early 1970s, and women's matches there sometimes draw crowds of up to 10,000 and are regularly reported in *Gazzetta Dello' Sport*, Italy's national daily sports newspaper. This is a far cry from the situation in the British press where women footballers and administrators are still sometimes more likely to appear in `fashion' features and on the Women's page than on the sports pages, although *The Express*

newspaper did run a women's football column each Tuesday in the late 1990s. Today (2002) *The Guardian* and *The Times* both run weekly women's football columns and the broadsheet press usually report on the major matches in the women's football calendar.



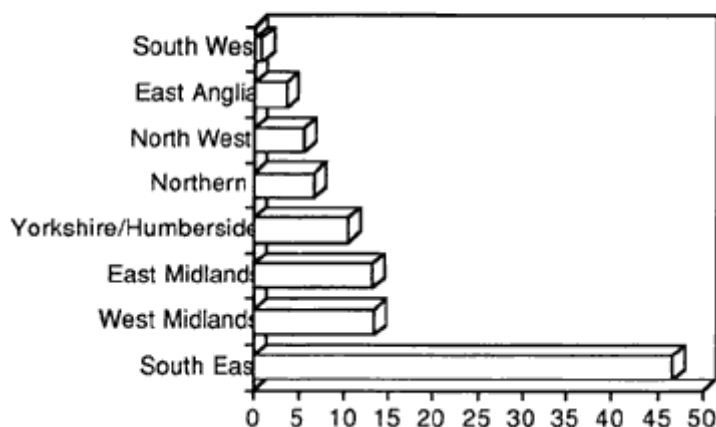
- 4.3 The most impressive figures for female participation are in America where there were 3-4 million registered female players in 1993, rising to 7.2 million in 1998. Most of these are college players. Soccer is seen in the US as a suitable alternative to the highly aggressive 'gridiron' US football game and so white, middle class parents are happy to see their children involved and mixed and girls' soccer are almost the norm in suburban schools. Female players, such as Mia Hamm, have become national figures in USA sport. The USA's success on the female football field has also been reflected in the fact that they won the first FIFA Women's World Championships which were held in China, in 1991, will host the 1999 tournament, and are current Olympic Champions (see Lopez, 1997, for a useful outline of the state of the women's game around the world). Legislation on equal opportunities in sport in the USA – Title IX – also means that females must have equal access to sports facilities and opportunities, for example in education establishments. In the UK, equal opportunities legislation has tended to *omit* sport.
- 4.4 The National League in England was also launched around the time of the first official female World Championship. National female teams had earlier played against each other in the *Mundialito* or 'Little World Cup' but this was the first time the event had secured FIFA recognition and support. The Championships were held in China in November 1991 and Norway and the United States played in the final. The Championships were also noted for having a number of women referees and the third and fourth place play-off was also refereed by a woman. In 1999, the Women's World Cup finals in the USA drew huge crowds as the home team eventually triumphed in a dramatic final. Women's football is also now an established Olympic sport. This has led to large crowds and a greater exposure and interest in the women's game world wide.
- 4.5 Whilst these nations are successfully expanding football for women, it is true to say that some women in Britain continue to face, 'cynical and hostile attitudes both from within the male game and from society generally' (Woodhouse, 1991: 2). Top football managers in England - and some players - have remarked that women have no place in the game as players or even as spectators. But, attitudes are changing and coupled with more exposure and sponsorship for the women's game progress is being made. Coverage by Channel 4 in 1989 of the Women's FA Cup attracted up to two million viewers and the men's World Cups in 1990 & 1994 and also Euro '96 further enhanced women's interest in the game. These are some of the factors leading to the recent boom in the numbers of women's clubs and in female players. This expansion in women's and girl's football can be seen in previously highlighted statistics. Sky TV currently own the rights to coverage of the women's game in England and when England played Germany in March 1998, the Sky audience for the live game was 119,000, making it

the 17th most popular of 83 events screened that week by Sky Sports, coming in ahead of Nationwide League football and men's rugby league.

5. WHO PLAYS WOMEN'S FOOTBALL AND WHAT ARE THEIR VIEWS?

5.1 In 1992 Jackie Woodhouse of the SNCCFR conducted a survey of players in the Women's National League. It provides facts and figures on who plays and where. Overwhelmingly, the female players were single (90.8%) and had no children (93.0%). This reflects the relative youth of the sample but it also, probably, says something about the difficulties involved in looking after a family (still mainly seen as a woman's responsibility) and trying to fit in other commitments. Also almost half of these players surveyed were situated in the SE and 1 in 4 were based in the Midlands. Figure 3 shows the geographical spread of female players in Britain in 1992.

Percentage of Players by Region



5.2 Interestingly, 82.4% of female National League players stated that they played football at junior school but of these only 1 in 4 (25.7%) played in PE lessons, the rest playing in the 'rough and tumble' of the school playground. This probably reflects school attitudes that football is not a suitable curriculum activity for girls. Of the 1992 survey sample, the majority said that they were encouraged to play football by one specific person (60.1%) and 1 in 5 mentioned their father (20.8%) and almost 1 in 10 their brother (8.8%). Only 4.3% said a woman was their main inspiration for becoming a player (2.3% stated mother, 1.3% stated female friends and only 0.7% said a sister was the main inspiration). This undoubtedly reflects the fact that football is a male interest sport.

5.3 Of the 1992 sample, 88.6% felt that it is easier now than it was five years ago for girls who want to play football and that attitudes were changing. 84.0% believed that attitudes were more positive to women playing football whilst NONE felt that attitudes were becoming more negative and almost half (44.6%) felt increased publicity and information would encourage girls and women to play in their area. 63.2% of the 1992 respondents expressed the desire to take an FA coaching course. An interesting aspect of this was that on the subject of women only coaching courses the sample was evenly split with no preference emerging on the subject of being taught by a male or female coach or in mixed company.

5.4 In 1999 Donna Woodhouse conducted a new survey of female players in England at the Sir Norman Chester Centre, covering 396 'elite' and other female players. She looked at a number of issues, including the changing extent to which female players are now encouraged to play football in

secondary school. Figure 4 shows that moist younger players were encouraged to play at school. Very few players who are now in their mid-20s or older had similar sorts of encouragement at school.

Figure 4: Secondary School Attitude to Girls Football by Age(%)

Age	Encouraging	Discouraging	Neutral
16-21	46.0	19.3	34.7
22-26	19.2	34.2	46.6
27-31	7.4	54.3	38.3
32-36	4.7	55.8	39.5
37-41	4.2	45.8	50.0

Source: Woodhouse 2002

- 5.5 Woodhouse also asked her female respondents who was the most important person in inspiring them to take up the sport. Her findings are included in Figure 5 below. Here it can be seen that a male figure – usually the father – is still important in inspiring and supporting female players in the late 1990s. However, friends seem more important for non-elite players than for others. Most female players point to someone who was important to setting them off to playing football – usually supporters from within the family. One-in-ten elite players now cite their *mothers* as the key influence.

Figure 5: Who was the biggest influence on you taking up playing football (%)

	Elite players	Other players
Father	31.3	23.0
Mother	9.4	5.6
Brother	15.6	11.0
Both parents	12.5	4.0
Friends	3.1	17.1
Self-motivation	6.1	10.8

Source: Woodhouse 2002

- 5.6 Woodhouse also asked here respondents for their views on how they thought local people regarded female football in the areas in which they played. The responses here are very interesting (see Figure 6). Only just over one-third of all respondents thought the female game was now seen as ‘normal’ in their local area. Almost three-out-of-ten still thought there was some opposition to female play locally. This climate for female footballers is not as hostile as that in 1992 – or before – but it is still not completely easy to play football if you are female in England today.

Figure 6: How is football for females viewed locally? (%)

As something which is normal	34.2
No real objections to it	33.9
Some opposition to it	29.4
Lots of opposition to it	2.5

Source: Woodhouse 2002

6. FEMALES AS FANS

- 6.1 Around 15% of respondents in the 2001 FA Premier League National Fan Survey were female and the sample demonstrated that female spectators come from a variety of socio economic backgrounds. Interestingly, many female 'new fans' are not exclusively young women, with this category being comprised of women across a variety of ages. Post-Heysel (1985) it was suggested in some quarters that football should be more 'feminised'. By encouraging more women and families to football matches, it was believed that the atmosphere of games could be 'civilised' and that hooliganism was less likely to occur if the context stressed more of a 'family' involvement. Coupled with the need to raise more revenue through the turnstiles, this has encouraged a number of clubs to introduce 'female-positive' policies by reducing the price of admittance for women (e.g. at Sunderland), by having crèche facilities (e.g. at Millwall and at Leeds United), by holding Family Football Nights targeted at female fans and children (e.g. at Leicester City) and by encouraging more community links with females (e.g. through the national *Football in the Community* scheme).
- 6.2 Back in 1990, the SNCCFR conducted a survey of female football fans. The sample was based on replies from female Football Supporters Association members. Respondents were asked for their observations and attitudes on major football issues as well as on their experiences of being a woman at a football match at that time. However, it must be remembered that this sample was of highly committed fans and did not represent those who stopped going to football matches through intimidation or because of the poor quality of available facilities for women.
- 6.3 Seven out of 10 female fans felt that football authorities could do more to attract female spectators to football. The main focus here was on an improvement in basic amenities such as toilet facilities (six out of 10). Less than one in five (18.3%) believed that all-seater stadia would be safer while fewer than one in 10 felt that all-seater stadia would combat football hooliganism. However, the 2001 National Fan Survey shows both male and female fans suggesting that all-seated stadia are safer and improve fan behaviour. Both males and females are concerned about declining 'match atmosphere' at football.
- 6.4 Also, in the 1990 survey there was a strong feeling that respondents wanted to be seen as 'football fans' rather than simply as women or *female* fans. This could be because of the stereotypes attached to women supporters, such as the belief that they only go to the match to idolise male players or that they go because their boyfriend goes, etc. Many wanted to see increased opportunities for women within the men's game however, and they felt that the role of women in the game needed to be taken more seriously by parents, teachers and the media. There was also the feeling that if women had more power within the game then things might change for the better, and seven out of 10 fans stated that they would like to see more women in positions of authority in the game.
- 6.5 Donna Woodhouse (2002) conducted the first surveys of fans at women's football matches in this country, in 1999. She gained responses from almost 1300 fans at three England women's matches in 1999 at Millwall, Oldham and West Bromich. Figure 7 tells us something about the sorts of people who attend women's football. We can see that many more fans at these games are female – but almost half are male supporters. This adult crowd is mainly white – like the crowds in men's football. Woodhouse also found that a large proportion of the fans for female matches of this kind had a link with someone playing in the match.

Figure 7: The Demographics of Fans at England Female International Matches (%)

	New Den	The Hawthorns	Boundary Park	Total
Male	44.4	42.9	48.8	45.4
Female	55.6	57.1	51.2	54.6
White	94.7	97.5	99	97.1
African Caribbean	3.9	2.5	0.5	2.3
Asian	1.4	0	0.5	0.6
Other	0	0	0	0.0
14 years or under	8.7	11.6	15.1	11.8
15-20 years	11.7	13.6	9.1	11.5
21-30 years	24.3	19.4	15.9	19.8
31-40 years	34.5	29.9	30.5	31.7
41-50 years	13.8	20.0	19.7	17.8
51 years or over	7.0	5.5	9.4	7.4
Professional	16.5	20.1	15.3	17.3
Managerial/technical	22.6	14.6	21.1	19.4
Skilled non-manual	22.9	25.6	28.0	25.5
Skilled manual	16.1	15.6	22.2	17.9
Partly skilled manual	15.1	18.1	13	15.5
Unskilled	6.8	6.0	0.4	4.4
Student	20.3	23.4	21.9	22.0
Employed	68.7	64.3	65.8	66.6
Not employed	7.2	5.8	5.2	6.4
Retired	3.8	3.9	7.1	5.0

Source: Woodhouse 2002

7. WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY IN FOOTBALL

- 7.1 One early example of women in positions of influence in the male game is provided by Annie Bassett, who became the first senior female Marketing Executive of a professional football club when she was appointed at Reading FC in 1987. There are a small, but increasing, number of women like her who have since become Club Secretaries and Commercial Managers inside football.. There are a handful of women directors in the game. One of these, Vicky Oyston, went on to become the Chair of Blackpool FC for a time. Oyston was once famously banned from the Tranmere Rovers' boardroom on the basis that it was a 'men-only' area. Rovers now have their own female Chief Executive, Lorraine Rogers. Most recently, Rachael Anderson a football agent, who acts for clients such as Don Hutchison and Julian Dicks, was prevented from attending the Professional Footballer's Association Annual Awards Ceremony, on the basis of her sex. After Anderson brought a discrimination case, the PFA now admits female guests to the event – but not, it seems, Ms Anderson.
- 7.2 When Jesse Milne joined the administrative staff at Everton immediately after the Second World War in 1946 she was, as a female administrator in football, something of an oddity. Today, few such appointments would raise much of an eyebrow. Even since 1990 the number of women involved at professional clubs in senior positions on the administration and management side has increased by 81% from 26 to 47. By 1995, we had at least one female Managing Director (Karren Brady at Birmingham City). Arguably, still too few clubs have female Directors or senior female staff, but the

face of most clubs now better reflects the interest expressed in the sport by women - about one in seven season ticket football fans at FA Premier League matches in 2001 is female. How many people know, too, that, effectively, the second-in-command at the sport's governing body, the Football Association was, for many years, an experienced female administrator, Pat Smith? There are women football presenters on television and radio (though as yet no female studio 'experts'), and football and sports journalists such as Alyson Rudd, Louise Taylor, Emma Lindsey and Sue Mott provide a fresh perspective on the game in the major national newspapers in this country. Women increasingly play the game, are running the line and blowing the whistle as referees, and are launching magazines devoted to 'the beautiful game'.

- 7.3 Below, we offer some brief sketches on women who have been involved in football at all levels and in all aspects of the sport. These are just a few of the females who have helped to change and improve the sport in Britain over the past 20 years and who are likely to be centrally involved in shaping the way we play, watch and stage the game in this country in the years which lie ahead.

Pat Smith: Ex-Deputy to the Chief Executive of the Football Association

- 7.4 Pat Smith joined the FA in 1965 as a 17 year old secretary and acted as the PA to the Chief Executive or his equivalent at the FA for close to 25 years before taking over as Deputy to the Chief Executive in September 1994. Smith and her sisters were first taken by their parents to watch their local club, Enfield, when she was 11 years of age and they became staunch followers of the club, home and away. Smith is another senior female figure in the game who has come up against sexist bars on women from boardrooms, but she thinks things in the game are finally, slowly, changing in this respect. She is probably best known to supporters for her hard work with the England Travel Club during the difficult times for England fans abroad in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Did people in football committee meetings still find it hard to believe a woman could do a senior administrative job in the sport? Smith commented:

"There has been a tendency to think I'm there to take the notes and pour the tea and coffee. When I joined the FA in the Sixties it was a very male-dominated organisation. It's gradually changed. I'm not a fanatical feminist, but I think you'll find in many walks of life if women are good at their job they're normally very good because they have to be totally committed. If I go into a meeting I would probably have to be better briefed than my male counterparts. Such prejudice, however, is disappearing; we're coming round to what a person can offer a position as opposed to whether they're male or female. An awful lot of the work here is big business now, but I can't help feeling it would have been advantageous to have played the game at some level. Sadly, I haven't"

Karren Brady: Managing Director, Birmingham City FC

- 7.5 Brady became the first female Managing Director at a professional club in 1993 when her boss, media entrepreneur, David Sullivan, bought Birmingham City out of receivership in that year for £2 million. Brady, an ex-Saatchi and Saatchi and LBC radio employee, was just 25 years of age when she was appointed. An Arsenal fan, Brady had not missed a home game at Highbury for six years, before taking over at Birmingham. Her policies have not always been popular with fans at Birmingham, but she has shown great resilience and strength of character in her job and she has been central to the recent revival of the club's fortunes. She has also faced bars from opposing club's board rooms - for being a woman! In 1995 she published a book, *Brady Plays the Blues*, on her life in football and is reported to be writing a novel about a female football manager. On being a woman in a man's domain she once said:

"There are women out there who do a million more things than I'll ever do for anybody; jobs for charities and underprivileged children, and they're not credited because that's what women do. Because I'm a woman in a man's world I get much more noted and credited for what I do. In some ways that's sad, because it just shows that it's all crap about women being treated equally, and on the other hand someone has to start the ball rolling. I have a sense of saying: 'If I can do this, then other women can, too'"

Jane Hoffen: TV & radio sports presenter

- 7.6 Jane worked on local and regional newspapers in Cornwall as a reporter. She then moved on to BBC Radio Devon and TVS as a news reporter, doing occasional pieces on sport, and was eventually encouraged by her news editor to apply for a sports reporter/presenter's job at Meridian TV, which she got. After a year at Meridian, Jane was offered a sports presenters job with Sky. She presents TV & radio items on sport for the BBC. She supports Manchester United: Has she experienced opposition in the game or in TV sport because she is a woman?

"I can honestly say I've never found a situation where somebody has suggested that I can't do the job because I am a woman. The men I've worked with have always been extremely supportive, including the players. Mark Bright, the Sheffield Wednesday forward was actually saying how much he enjoyed women's involvement in the game".

Gillian Coulthard: England international footballer.

- 7.7 After playing at the highest level for 16 years, England sweeper Coulthard collected her 100th cap against Scotland in August 1997 and has a one goal in every four games strike rate. The Doncaster Belles' stalwart managed to fit in four training sessions and a match every week, alongside her full-time factory job. She turned down offers to play pro. football in Sweden, Italy and Belgium, and she used her annual leave from work to play for her country. Speaking about women's football in other countries, Gill said:

Women footballers on the continent get released (from work] or are full time. It's a problem for us to get fitness levels up to those of the Americans for example. We have to break down those barriers.'

Julie Welch: football journalist, broadcaster and writer

- 7.8 Welch was the first female football reporter on a national newspaper, the *Sunday Times*, in the 1970s. In the late 1970s Julie had trials for the BBC TV for doing match reports for *Grandstand*. A male producer reminded her to wear a "nice blouse" on screen as a concession to femininity (She didn't get the job!). A Tottenham Hotspur fan, she wrote an autobiographical play for BBC TV about a young female devotee of Spurs' midfielder and captain, Danny Blanchflower, and recently praised stadium redevelopment in Britain for its improvements in facilities for women. She also presented *Sporting Profiles* for Radio 5 in 1994. Welch recently complained about the lack of female football pundits on TV:

"Women have been in space, women have run countries, but women football pundits are there none. Of all the World Cup women talk I've tapped into not one conversation has been anything less than informed or serious. Where in the studio are the women who have played the game? If Karen Walker (Doncaster Belles) talks as she scores goals it would be good to

hear. Why should women be deprived of their right to comment on the most beautiful game in the world just because the men need to do a spot of bonding?"

Jean Simpson: journalist.

- 7.9 An Cambridge graduate and former news and features editor of *The Voice*, an African Caribbean newspaper, Jean wrote *The Express's* women's football column, an 'in season' feature which from January 1998. Jean was a football player at University, and she says of women's football:

'It's a very different game from the men's game, because the physical side isn't as obvious, although some women players can be very aggressive...the game is more skilful, more flowing...more continental than the men's game.'

Jean saw the role of her column to be as much about *promoting* the game as reporting on it and she wants other women to be inspired by players such as Gill Coulthard. She says writing the column is the only job she had ever had where *every* letter from readers was positive!

Kate Hoey: Labour MP for Vauxhall, London

- 7.10 An ex-education officer at Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur, and recently Sports Minister, Hoey is a passionate supporter of the sport who has been outspoken recently about alleged corruption in top level football in England. Hoey is also convinced that sport, especially football, is as central to the national life of Britain as are other 'welfare' provisions. She is determined, therefore, to see organised team sports played seriously in British schools once more. Of the World Cup Finals in the USA in 1994 she commented:

"It is not an oddity that as a woman I should love football. It is odd that others should think so. Perhaps it is because this tournament is in America, where so many millions of women play the game and where sport, generally, is not so exclusively a male domain, that the World Cup has generated more interest across the board. Among all the trendy suits and gold bracelets [among TV pundits] only one woman appeared. The BBC's Hazel Irvine did a fine job within a restricted brief. But, surely, there are women around who could have talked about football as sensibly as the men."

Wendy Toms: FA Premier League referee's assistant

- 7.11 After years of calling them linesmen' we, finally and properly, have to talk about 'referee's assistants' following the promotion of Wendy Toms, then a 31 year old Parcelforce office worker from Poole, in Dorset, onto the Football League list in 1995. She graduated to the Premier League in 1998. We are slowly catching up with some other countries around the world in recruiting female match officials; New Zealander, Linda Black, is on the FIFA list of international referees and assistants, and Gertrud Regus has been running the line in Germany's Bundesliga since 1993. The fight for equality for female officials is also going on at the local level in Britain. In October 1995 a qualified woman official, Georgina Christoforou, successfully took the South East Counties League to an industrial tribunal following its refusal to accept her application as a linesperson for both 1993/4 and 1994/5. Christoforou was awarded an undisclosed sum following which her solicitor, Jane Deighton, commented that the case was a milestone for female match officials: "This is the first time that any football league has been required to operate a policy of selection which is fair and doesn't discriminate

against the women.". Writing on Wendy Toms' debut Football League match, at Torquay United on 20 August 1994, *The Observer* (21 August 1994) commented:

"(Toms) is a relatively old hand at refereeing some of the game's rougher trade in the lower leagues. She doesn't bother with the abuse as long as it remains good natured. Most of it, she doesn't hear. She didn't flinch; she wears the obligatory armour for the job. There were plenty of 'Well done, love', extended in warm, Devon tones. Occasionally, the cheers for her flamboyant flourished flag were rather too overtly ironic. 'Patronising sods,' she probably thought under her breath. Wendy Toms fits into a men's world on defiant merit. Her ambition and quiet sense of feminism are not hidden. She doesn't want to go on running the line; she aims to convince soccer's hierarchy that she is also worth becoming the first female ref in the Football League."

Karen Buchanan: founding editor, Four-Four-Two football magazine

- 7.12 Karen started as an editorial assistant at Haymarket publishing, whom she persuaded there was a large 'intelligent' market for a new, serious football magazine. This became *Four Four Two*. Early issues of the magazine, which was launched under Buchanan's leadership in 1994, attracted more than 60,000 readers. Buchanan is a devoted follower of Norwich City and has a dream of, one day, owning the club! She has since moved on to become a freelance football writer. *Four-Four-Two* does not actively promote the involvement of women in the game as players - the magazine has carried just eight pages about women's football in its first 1800 pages - and it carries few pieces specifically on women as supporters. Buchanan argued that the magazine was for fans - male and female alike- and there were plenty of articles written by female contributors, including Buchanan, herself, and Amy Lawrence. In Issue 5 (Jan. 1995), however, there was the rare voice of a female fan to savour:

"Margaret O'Dwyer's friends think she's mad. She's one of a select band of Hartlepool fans who support the team through thin and even thinner. A section head at Hartlepool Power Station, Margaret attends games with her sister, Maureen. Their husbands only go occasionally. 'Colin thinks I'm a bit mad, but he's really supportive.' Margaret and Maureen once left a wedding half way through to make a game against York. 'It was an important match, says Margaret. Besides, we managed to persuade the groom to come with us.' She was first taken to a game when she was ten. 'On the coach home everyone seemed happy, even though we'd lost 4-1. I suppose that was the norm".

- 7.13 It is clear from the above that a woman's support of football does not just end on the terraces or stands. A number of women have started their own fanzines. *'Balls'* was aimed especially at women and *'Born Kicking'* took stereotypes about women fans and quashed them with gusto. According to *'Balls'* editor, Julie Pritchard, it "counters the image that girls don't know anything about football" (Quoted in *The Guardian*, 1988). *Women's Soccer World'* is a US publication dedicated to women's soccer worldwide and in Britain, *On The Ball* provides coverage of the British domestic and international scenes.
- 7.14 Such publications are to be encouraged. In the SNCCFR's *Female Fan Survey*, the majority of respondents stated that they would like to see more women writing about the national game. These would add to figures such as those above. One of the most unusual portrayals of a woman in football was *The Manageress* series on Channel 4 in 1990. This series did much to try to promote a very different image for women in a hostile, male dominated sport and could be seen as a reflection of a woman's struggle to be taken seriously in other areas of society. The production team had to 'overcome the daunting problem of convincing viewers to take seriously the notion of a powerful woman, the team boss, in the chauvinistic male bastion of British football' (*Independent on Sunday*, May 6, 1990). The series proved highly successful and averaged 4.1 million viewers per episode. This audience was evenly split between males and females and the programmes also proved to be popular

within the footballing community itself. More recently (*from 1998*), the BBC drama *Playing The Field* spent a season with the fictional *Castlefield Blues* women's team and the show proved so popular that a further series were commissioned. However, there was criticism from within the women's game of the depiction of off-the-field antics of the players, including boozy nights out and drug taking, and many were concerned about the inclusion of a plot line in which a lesbian player 'seduces' a 'straight' team mate. Pete Davies' book on the Doncaster Belles (referenced at the end of this Factsheet) provides us with an insight into the activities of players at a 'real' elite female club and was the basis for a television documentary about the same club on Channel 4.

8. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 8.1 From the 1998/99 season a new League structure emerged for the women's game in England, with combination leagues established to feed into the National Premier League structure, bridging the gap between established elite teams and more embryonic ones. There are now 30 clubs in the Premier League, 10 in the top flight and 10 each in the Northern and Southern Divisions. The top team from each of these Divisions at the end of the season is promoted to the Premier League.
- 8.2 The situation for women in the game has started to change considerably in the last few years with a major step being the FA take over of the administration of the women's game in 1993. This move has provided better support and financial backing for the women's game in this country and has led to increased publicity and sponsorship and better coaching and provision of facilities. The FA appointed a National Co-Ordinator of Women's Football and since 1990 the FA have had 3 full-time Regional Directors for football and females - one for the Midlands region, one for the Northern region and one for the Southern region. The FA also for the first time, held a national conference in November 1992 on the 'Development of Girl's and Women's Football in the UK.' Issues around female play have also been discussed at two conferences of the newly established Football Associations Coaches Association (1997 and 1998).
- 8.3 Since the introduction of Howard Wilkinson as Technical Director, the FA's Charter for Excellence and the resultant Talent Development Plan, means that an additional two Regional Directors have been appointed and in August 1998, 20 Centres of Excellence for women's football were approved by the FA, with the FA contributing £5000 per centre per annum. New developments are aimed at increasing the number of females holding the FA Advanced Coaching qualifications. A Coach Mentoring Scheme was established by the FA to encourage women to train to the very highest level. Significantly, for the first time, the England team also now has a female coach, ex England international and vice captain, Hope Powell, who at 31, was also the youngest ever national coach in England.
- 8.4 It can be seen, then, that major changes seem to be taking place, both at the highest level of the footballing hierarchy and also at the grass roots level of the game. Increased interest and exposure is likely to lead to even more growth in the numbers of female players. The number of female officials is also rising, with Wendy Toms becoming the first female to act as Referees Assistant in an FA Premier League game, in the 1997/98 season. The negative attitudes of some will take a long time to overcome, but with the FA promising a new professionalised national women's league from 2003 and the BBC carrying live coverage of the women's FA Cup final for the first time in 2002, better times for the women's game seem to lie ahead.

Key dates in women's football.

1895

March 23rd, the first recorded women's football match ends with a 7-1 victory for The North over The South.

1902

FA Council forbids its teams from playing 'lady teams:

1917-1919

During the First World War, women's factory teams began to spring up, raising money for charities.

1920

April 30th, saw the first women's international game. Dick Ken Ladies representing England, beat a French team 2-0 in front of 25,000 On Boxing day, the biggest crowd for a women's game in this Country, 53,000, saw Dick Kerr's beat St Helen's ladies 4-0 at Goodison Park.

1921

December 5th, the FA bans women's from playing on League grounds. 'The Council feel impelled to express their strong opinion that the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not be encouraged.'

1921-1965

The ban caused interest and participation to diminish, although a few women's game did take place.

1966

There is a resurgence in the women's game after the England men's World Cup victory.

1969

In September, a member of FA Council was appointed to the UEFA Commission to deal with all matters relating to women's football. In November, the Women's Football Association (WFA) was formed with 44 members.

1971

In July, FA Council lifted the ban forbidding women from playing on the grounds of clubs affiliated to the FA

In November 1971, UEFA recommend that all national associations take charge of women's football

1972

In February, the FA and WFA agree that women's clubs should be affiliated to the WFA which should be supervised and controlled by the FA.

1983

The FA invite the WFA to affiliate to them on the same basis as county FAs.

1989

Channel 4 screened a series of one hour programmes, covering the WFA Cup, attracting audiences of up to three million, improving the profile of the game.

1990

English Schools Football Association changes its constitution, permitting mixed football up to the age of 11. The FA Coaching n Education Department appoints three women as Assistant Regional Directors to encourage more female participation in the game.

1991

In September, the WFA launches a National League, with 24 clubs, with 8 teams in each of the North, South and Midland Divisions.

1992

In November, the FA runs a conference on the Development of Girls' and Women's Football.

1993

In July, the FA reaffirms its commitment to women's football by establishing a Women's Football Committee and the post of Women's Football Co-ordinator. Women's football also assimilates into other FA Departments, providing expertise and resources. The FA also takes over responsibility for the management and administration of the international squad.

1993/94

The FA takes control of the WFA National Cup competition which becomes the Women's Challenge Cup, with 137 entrants.

1994/95

The FA assumes responsibility for the organisation and administration of the Women's National League. It becomes the FA Women's Premier League and has 30 teams, 10 in each division.

1998

First female national coach of England appointed.

20 Centres of excellence launched

FA Talent Development Plan launched.

In October, the FA hosts the UEFA Conference on Women and Football

1999/2000

Fulham women's team goes professional, the first in England

2000/2001

A crowd of almost 14,000 watch Fulham v Arsenal clash in the final of the AXA FA Women's Cup at Selhurst Park, the largest crowd in the modern history of the women's game in England. Arsenal beat the professionals of Fulham, 1-0, thus completing the treble.

2001/2002

The BBC to screen 'live' the women's FA Cup final for the first time

The FA to launch a new professional women's league in England in 2003

WFA Cup Winners

1971 Southampton	1979 Southampton	1987 Doncaster Belles
1972 Southampton	1980 St. Helen's	1988 Doncaster Belles
1973 Southampton	1981 Southampton	1989 Leasowe Pacific
1974 Fodens	1982 Lowestoft	1990 Doncaster Belles
1975 Southampton	1983 Doncaster Belles	1991 Millwall
1976 Southampton	1984 Howbury Grange	1992 Doncaster Belles
1977 QPR	1985 Friends of Fulham	1993 Arsenal
1978 Southampton	1986 Norwich	

FA Women's Cup Winners

1994 Doncaster Belles
 1995 Arsenal
 1996 Croydon
 1997 Millwall Lionesses
 1998 Arsenal
 1999 Arsenal

League Cup Winners

1993 Arsenal (WFA Comp.)
 1994 Arsenal
 1995 Wimbledon
 1996 Wembley
 1997 Millwall Lionesses
 1998 Arsenal
 1999 Arsenal

FA Women's National Premier League Winners

1992/93 Arsenal	1995/96 Croydon
1993/94 Doncaster Belles	1996/97 Arsenal
1994/95 Arsenal	1997/98 Everton
	1998/99 Arsenal

UEFA Champions

1984 Sweden	1993 Norway
1987 Norway	1995 Germany
1989 Germany	1997 Germany
1991 Germany	1999 Norway

Useful addresses

English Schools Football Association
 4A Eastgate Street
 Stafford
 Staffordshire
 ST16 2NQ

UEFA
 Chemin de la Redoute
 54, 1260
 Nyon
 Switzerland

FIFA
 FIFA House
 11 Hitziweg
 PO Box 85, 8030
 Zurich Switzerland

Football Association
 Soho Square
 London

Professional Footballer's Association
 2 Oxford Court
 Bishopsgate
 Manchester
 M2 3WQ

Women's Sports Foundation
 305-315 Hither Green Lane
 Lewisham
 London
 SE12 6TJ

Sports Council
 16 Upper Woburn. Place
 London
 WCIH OQ

Useful Texts**Gender/Sport/Sociology**

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Last updated by John Williams, March 2002.