

RAF FA – Women's Football Across the RAF

RAF Cosford

The RAF Cosford Women's team started in July 21 and consistently attracts between 25-30% of the female PH2 trainee population at station, as well as being open to permanent staff on station.

Some of our players wanted to put into words what they enjoy about the women's football club:



- “The female football team at Cosford has had a massive positive influence on my mental health. I have always struggled with social aspects of communication, however, whilst being on the team my social skills have greatly increased and my friendship circle has expanded. I know I can go to any one of the girls and they'll have my back. I feel that this team is a part of my family, and I definitely wouldn't still be in the RAF without them.”
- “I think sports are a great way to relieve stress in the phase 2 learning environment, its also a great opportunity to stay fit and make friends. That's what I'm grateful for since joining the football club at Cosford- great coaches/team mates and lots of fun!”

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RAF Waddington

The RAF Waddington Women's team started in April 21 and have quickly established a squad of 24 players. This includes a whole range of skill/experience levels, we have 2 LFT players, one dependant who has played for Crystal palace, all the way down to 5-6 who never kicked a ball before. We have received great support from the Gym and Football club on unit, to the point the Gym have purchased a proper ladies kit.

Overall, the participation across training sessions ranges from 7-17 players per week. From the start to now we have seen a huge change in ability and an excellent team ethos throughout. We have just started to introduce 3-man running such is the rate of progression. The RAF Waddington Women's team is currently competing in the Lincolnshire Services 7-a-Side Female League.

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RAF Boulmer

At RAF Boulmer we are establishing a Women's Football Team who are looking to train weekly in order to develop skills for all that get involved. Most women who take part have never played football before but with the help of the Men's coaching team, women are learning a new skill, boosting their fitness levels and increasing camaraderie through the ranks. The RAF Boulmer Women's Football Team look forward to defending their win of the inaugural Women's Air Ops 5-a-side tournament at RAF Shawbury and entering other women's football tournaments throughout the year.

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RAF Wyton

At RAF Wyton we currently have around 10 girls from different trades/ranks/Services. Due to our coach currently being on maternity we have combined our team with the RAF Wittering team to continue with training and games for this season with the hope of returning fully back to Wyton by the summer. With RAF Wittering we train once a week and either play a game against another military team or we play in our 5 a-side local league each week.

At RAF Wyton we trained once a week with the hopes of gaining more players to join a local/military league. We played in the Women's tournament at RAF Cosford back in 2021 which was the first time a lot of our players had ever been in a match environment and was the first time we had the chance to play with each other as a full team. This really helped us to boost our confidence in a match environment and analyse the areas we needed to focus on for the next training session.

We hope by next season, when we have our complete team together, to get involved with either a local league and/or a military league.

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RAF Wittering

This year RAF Wittering has set up its first Women's football team, competing with other RAF and Army teams in the Lincolnshire Services Association Football League. We have joined up with RAF Wyton so we can bring a bigger group of women together and enable sustainability. From beginners to RAF Representative players, people are getting involved and enjoying themselves through football. We train regularly once a week and if there is no league match, we often take part in the local Power League which everyone enjoys.

Going forwards we hope to continue to develop women's football in a positive atmosphere, making sure everyone keeps enjoying the sport and remain inclusive to all abilities. We have made great headway in the last year, and we very much hope to see the same progress in the year to come.

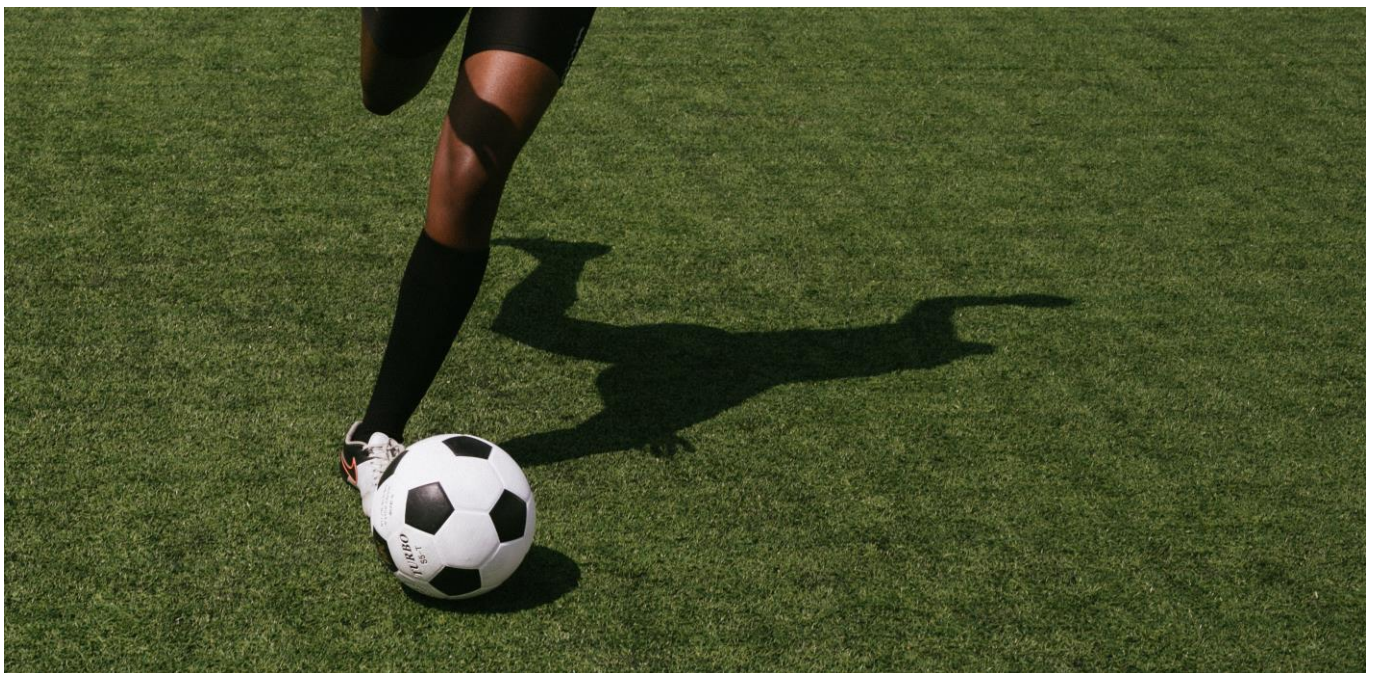
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RAF Akrotiri

The team is still fairly new following a long break during Covid. Training is very casual, a couple of us on the team take it in turns to run a session and it usually ends with a small game. Unfortunately, we did struggle for numbers over the winter and it doesn't help that people are unable to commit as they are on detachment or regularly fly back to the UK etc. Saying that, our main focus has always been to have fun and make friends, so we like to make the most of each session regardless of numbers.

Our future plans are to find a new permanent coach and we would also like to organise some friendly fixtures on the island, with both Cypriot teams and Dhekelia. For those wanting to get involved, we train Tuesdays 1900-2000 on the Astroturf at Akrotiri and we welcome all abilities including dependants and civilians with access to the camp.

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RAF Shawbury

The RAF Shawbury Ladies FC was established in 2019 and consists of players from the married patch, contractors, and those currently serving in the RAF and Royal Navy. As a Tri – Service base we promote the team to all three services, trainees and permanent staff, and welcome players of all ages and abilities. Due to being a Phase 2 training establishment there is a quick turnaround of players, however we encourage those to attend even if it is only for a short period.

RAF Shawbury are coached by two coaches, Scott Turner and Dave Belcher, and train every Tuesday 1800 – 1900 on the Astroturf. They have participated in the Shawbury Air Ops 5-a-side tournament and a small number of local matches. In the coming months the team are hoping to arrange more games to build confidence and experience amongst the players, in addition to continuing to develop fitness and friendships.

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