

5. ENGLAND TEAMS

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5.1 ENGLAND SENIOR SQUAD

The England Senior squad reaches a transition period following the exit from the World Cup in Germany at the hands of Portugal. The defeat sees the end of Sven-Goran Eriksson's reign as Head Coach after 67 matches and the third longest tenure in English football's history.

England, like many of the other fancied teams in Germany, came back early and it will now be the responsibility of new England Head Coach Steve McClaren to focus on how to move things forward for Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland. Those involved with the team will analyse the positives and the negatives and look to take forward an extremely talented group of players.

What's important is that the nation gets behind the coach and the team and that we manage to build on the fantastic support that followed England at home and in Portugal. It all starts with a home qualifier at Old Trafford against Andorra on September 2nd.

5.2 ENGLAND YOUTH SQUADS

When Sven-Göran Eriksson named his squad for the World Cup, every single player selected had appeared for an England youth team before making the step up the senior side. It's a clear vindication of the work done in recent times by those working with England's young players.

Ray Clemence, The FA's Head of Development Teams, is committed to giving today's young stars the best possible chance of following the likes of Michael Owen and Wayne Rooney into the senior team.

Playing regular top quality international football gives a young player a huge advantage. The experience familiarises a player with the build-up to an international fixture, the increased attention that comes with wearing the Three Lions and provides the knowledge of what is required of an international footballer.

As Ray explains, "International football is very different from club football. It would be far more difficult for a player when they get picked for the senior team if they have not appeared in any youth international football. It will be like a whole new world to them.

"At the younger end, the players may be used to a couple of hundred people seeing them play an Academy game on a Saturday. For our international youth games we've seen some substantial attendances at all levels and that's a great experience for them."

While the focus for the national coaches is the development of the players, there is also the added incentive of competitive action. England's Under-17 and Under-19 teams take part in qualifying groups with the ambition of reaching annual European Championships. Last year, the Under-19s reached the Final of the competition.

Each team is led by an experienced, highly qualified coach. Martin Hunter and John Peacock, for example, as well as coaching the Under-19 and Under-17 teams respectively, are also coach educators. Hunter is responsible for helping to put together the Pro Licence for the elite coaches in England.

"We have to strike a balance between developing the players and winning matches. The most important thing for me is the development of the players because everyone wants to see the England Senior team winning major tournaments and you only need to look at the current squad to see how many of them came through the system.

"There are European Championships at Under-17, Under-19 and Under-21 level and we want to go as far as we can and try and win those tournaments. There are still improvements we need to put in place to go that final step and win those championships."

The FA has regional scouts up and down the country who work alongside local scouts watching games at every club Academy and Centre of Excellence. They report into The FA where a central database is run.

Players who are highly recommended by the regional scouts are then watched by the national coaches to see if they feel they can make the step up.

The national coaches watch at least three games a week in an effort to get the best players into the international squads and provide them the best chance of developing.

Youth players today have a better opportunity than ever to succeed but the onus is on the player to show the will and the ability to take on board all the information they are given in terms of fitness, nutrition, tactics and more. In the professional game, players must make sacrifices in order to make it to the top and even more throughout their careers if they wish to stay there.

The FA runs England teams at Under-16, Under-17, Under-18, Under-19, Under-20 and Under-21 level.

The Under-16s compete against the Home Nations in the annual Victory Shield each autumn. The Under-17s and Under-19s compete for annual European Championships while the other age groups compete in friendlies.

The Under-21s will resume competitive action in August when qualifying starts for the 2007 European Championship. Matches are played around the country to give all supporters the chance to see the future England stars in action.

5.3 ENGLAND WOMEN'S SENIOR SQUAD

In the most recent FIFA Rankings, England are ranked 12th in the world, and currently top the World Cup 2007 qualification group which includes France, Holland, Austria and Hungary, with two games left to play. This is England's best chance of qualifying for the finals, to take place in China next year, since 1993.

The team went through the entire 2005/06 season undefeated, something they have not done in 13 years, including draws against Sweden and France who are ranked 5th and 6th respectively. The team is significantly closing the gap on the top nations, specifically Germany and Sweden who started their investment in the game 25 years prior to England.

In the summer of 2005 the UEFA European Women's Championship were staged in the North West of England. The tournament provided a platform to show the world the advance in the women's game. England automatically qualified as hosts for Euro 2005 and went into the tournament 11-matches unbeaten. Despite performing well the team missed out on the

semi-finals, losing to Denmark and Sweden after beating Finland in the opening game. The National Coach is Hope Powell, a former England player who won 66 caps and scored 33 goals from midfield. Hope retired from playing when she took over as the first full-time manager (and The FA's first female national coach) in June 1998. She has received an OBE for her services to the game and was the first female coach to earn the UEFA Pro-Licence – the highest football coaching qualification available.

5.4 ENGLAND WOMEN'S YOUTH SQUADS

The two newest additions to the roster of England teams are the Under 19 (formerly under 18) and Under 17 (formerly under 16) Women's squads, both led by Hope Powell, the National Coach for Women's Football.

The Under 18 team was originally established in 1997, when UEFA set up its first European Championship at this level. England reached the quarter final stage of only their second competition in 1998/99. In 1999 this was followed by the introduction of the Under 16 team.

In 2001 UEFA increased these age groups to Under 19 and Under 17 respectively, bringing the youth competitions in to line with the male game.

The teams are key testing grounds for England's young talent before they make the step up to senior level.

In order to further develop the most talented players, The FA also launched a National Player Development Centre at Loughborough University in 2001. This national academy takes applications from approximately 20 players per academic year on a fully-funded football scholarship for up to four years. The Centre provides coaching from Monday-Friday, as well as allowing the players to continue their education.

Due to the introduction of Centres of Excellence and the Player Development Centre at Loughborough University, there are far more high quality players coming through than ever before with Karen Carney, Eniola Aluko and Lianne Sanderson just some of the great examples, whilst at U21 and U19 level; England teams are now competing with and beating some of the top nations in world football.

With the introduction of the UEFA Women's Cup in 2001/02, English teams now have a chance to pit themselves against the best club sides in Europe, further helping the learning curve of young players, with Arsenal having reached the Quarter Finals only a short time ago.

5.5 ENGLAND DISABILITY SQUADS

Sven Göran-Eriksson isn't the only manager who will take an England team to a World Cup in Germany this summer - the England Learning Disability team will travel to defend their world title.

Lyndon Lynch will have added pressure come July when his England Learning Disability side take on the world's best in Germany. His team were ranked 10th in the world when they won the World Cup in style in Japan in 2002, but they won't have the luxury of being outsiders this time.

"The World Cup in 2002 was absolutely wonderful," explained Lynch, who has managed the team since it was launched in 1999.

"We played at the same World Cup stadiums in and around Tokyo and won all of our group games easily, including a 21-0 win against Hong Kong. The Quarter-Final against Portugal, which we won 1-0, was the hardest game, before beating Russia 8-1 in the Semi and Holland 2-1 in the Final – in front of 26,000 fans!"

The FA runs six disability England teams, of which the Learning Disability squad is the most successful. Learning Disability football is played to normal FIFA rules. To qualify for the side, players must have an intellectual disability, for example have an IQ below the range of 70-75, or be in special education or special employment. Lynch must use his qualities of management just as much off the pitch to ensure his squad keeps its focus on the tournament.

"It's certainly a 24/7 job. Because of their learning disability the players have not had much success, particularly in their school life, and that can sometimes mean they have rebellious behaviour.

"We try to instill success and show them they can do well in football. They can take the discipline that we give them in an organised football environment and take it into the rest of their lives. "It's just simple things like them remembering what time to turn up for meetings or appointments that can be so difficult for them. Football has given them contact with other players who have similar disabilities from England and other countries. The players come in with real low self esteem but representing their country can give them great confidence."

The World Cup will kick-off on 29 July and after beating France 10-0 earlier this season, and hosts Germany 6-1 in their final warm-up game, confidence is high.

Lynch added: "If we take the full squad and the players remain free from injury through the tournament, we have an excellent chance of making the Final. My aim is to win it again."

The FA runs six Disability England teams which compete internationally throughout the year. The teams are:

- Blind
- Learning Disability
- Cerebral Palsy
- Partially Sighted
- Deaf
- Amputees

For more information visit www.TheFA.com/England/DisabledTeams

5.6 THE OFFICIAL ENGLAND SUPPORTERS CLUB - 'ENGLANDFANS'

The englandfans membership scheme was re-launched in January 2005 as a two-tiered system after extensive consultation with members and non-members up and down the country.

The membership scheme was advertised in every England home match programme of the qualifying campaign, at FA conferences and also on perimeter boards at all FA competition fixtures.

The two tiers of membership are broken down as follows:

'englandfans+': For those interested in following England at home, away and at the 2006 World Cup. Membership of this tier was capped on reaching 25,000, to allow members a realistic chance of acquiring tickets.

'englandfans': For those wanting priority access to tickets for home fixtures only.

CONSULTATION

The FA values the relationship it has with its 'englandfans' members and appreciates the symbolic value of access to the more high-profile members of FA staff in order to discuss current issues.

The FA Chief Executive Brian Barwick's first public appearance was at an 'englandfans' forum, thus demonstrating a real commitment to supporter consultation.

In addition, the Head of Customer Relations and 'englandfans' and Senior 'englandfans' Officers have attended over 30 forums and meetings in the build-up to the World Cup 2006. Although this may not have the impact of an appearance from a 'name', these are the key FA staff involved in the 'englandfans' decision-making process.

5.7 ALLTOGETHERNOW.

Prior to the World Cup, The FA has launched a campaign together with England supporters to promote positive fan behaviour and respect for Germany and its people.

This summer, tens of thousands of England fans boarded flights, trains and ferries with one destination - Germany.

The World Cup promised to be an enormous football party, with the host country providing the warmest of welcomes. It was in this spirit of friendship that The FA launched the Alltogethernow 2006 campaign in conjunction with England supporters groups. Aimed at showing a positive image of England fans to people in Germany and around the world, it also successfully demonstrated that the stereotyped image of anti-social and violent behaviour is not a true reflection of genuine England supporters, and that the dark days of the 1980s are behind us.

Alltogethernow 2006 follows on the back of a similar and successful campaign ahead of Euro 2004, when over 50,000 England supporters made Portuguese stadiums their own with positive, passionate and very vocal support. UEFA paid tribute to their contribution to the tournament's atmosphere and success by giving them 9 out of 10.

This year's campaign was launched on the eve of England's friendly against Uruguay at Anfield by David Beckham, Steven Gerrard and Sven-Göran Eriksson.

Beckham said: "England fans are the best supporters in the world. No other country gets the support we do, especially at big tournaments. The fans can really help the team by giving us positive, passionate support."

Gerrard added: "The England fans are amazing. Let's go to Germany with respect for our hosts and behave like we did in Portugal. Let's go and enjoy it."

Sven also lent his full support to the campaign: "Since I came to England I have been amazed at the dedication of English football fans. In Portugal especially it was incredible how many fans were there and they behaved themselves extremely well. We need to continue that in Germany. We certainly do not want to hear songs like Ten German Bombers."

An Alltogethernow 2006 flag was displayed on the pitch at Anfield in the first of a series of events to raise public and media consciousness. Before and during the World Cup, a range of initiatives took place around England and in Germany, organised primarily by the fans for the fans and supported by The FA. They included road shows, regional competitions, player messages, ambassador visits to Germany and a variety of media events.

Ian Murphy, The FA's Head of Customer Relations and englandfans, has seen the benefit of closer relationships with fans groups in recent years. He said: "Since Euro 2000 we have made a concerted effort to build stronger links with the fans. We consult with them on the issues that concern them, and hold regular meetings and forums around the country.

"The fans themselves deserve enormous credit for the way in which they have improved their image, 99 per cent of England supporters are genuine fans who love the game and following England. They don't want to be associated with the hooligan tag."

