

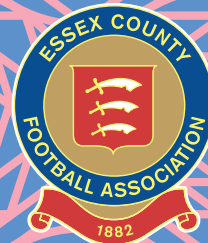
Essex County FA

Guide to Female Grassroots Football



Been Inspired?

GET INVOLVED



The Lionesses have continued to re-write the history books since their Euro 2022 triumph and are not going to stop!

England Football's Find football tool helps you find the type of football that suits you. Click [HERE](#) to find your football.

For more information on football opportunities in Essex contact us via info@essexfa.com

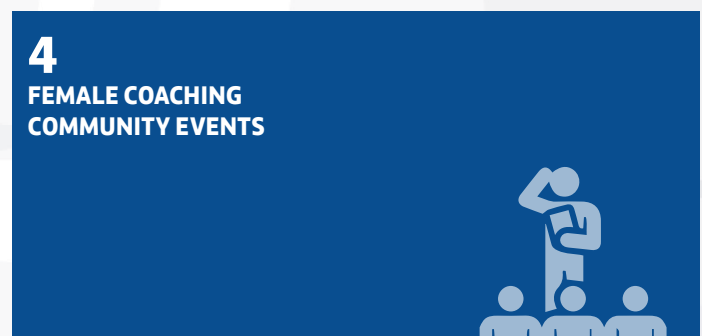
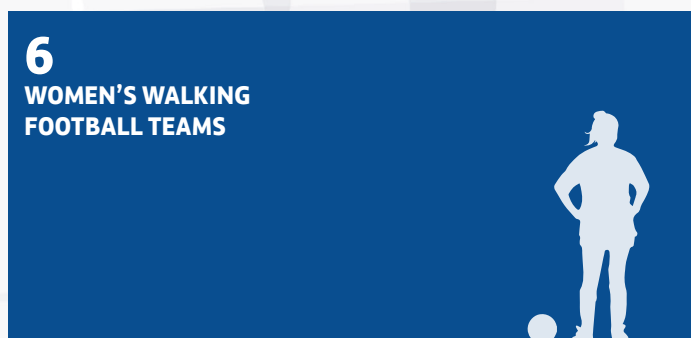
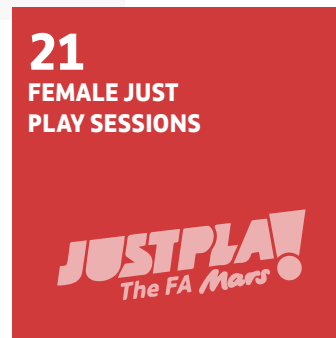
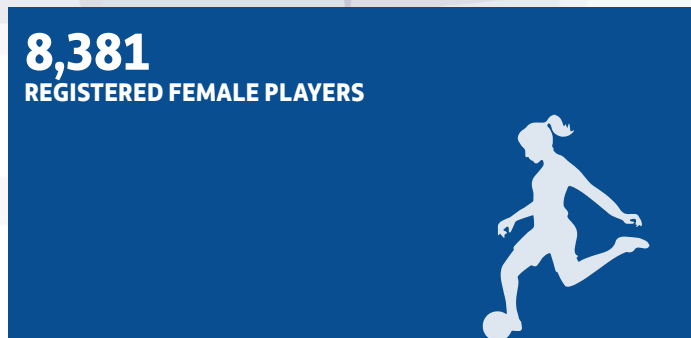


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2022/23 Female Pathway



FA Funded Recreational Programmes

Initiative for Female Players Aged 5-11



Weetabix Wildcats is the place to be, everyone is super awesome - from the friends you'll meet to the FA-qualified coaches and volunteers who deliver the sessions.

It's a non-competitive football for girls who want to give it a go for the very first time or want to play with other girls their own age. Most importantly, Weetabix Wildcats is all about having loads of fun and meeting new amazing friends.

To find your local Weetabix Wildcats session, head to our website NOW!
[Weetabix Wildcats - Essex FA](#)



Too old for Weetabix Wildcats? Don't Worry become a SQUAD girl with England Football's SQUAD Girls' Football programme.

The aim for this exciting programme is to provide girls between the ages of 12-14 with a fun, relevant and engaging recreational offer which allows them to develop themselves as much as their football skills in a safe, inclusive environment.

To find your local SQUAD session, head to our website NOW!
[Squad Girls - Essex FA](#)



The FA Snickers Just Play! gives the casual footballer a chance to just turn up to a venue and play football. The Just Play kickabout is recreational football at its best – it's about turning up for an hour of exercise and a bit of fun. It's football for those who can't or don't want to commit to an eight-month long season of matches and training.

FA Snickers Just Play! is purely for adults, for men, for women, for those who think they're talented and for those who think they aren't. It's also for those with a disability or for 16–25s or women-only or even veterans; there's a kickabout designed specifically for you, whatever your age or ability.

[Snickers Just Play - Essex FA](#)

PARENT ZONE FEMALE PLAYER PATHWAYS



This is a guide for parents and carers to help define the different football environments for female players within the County of Essex, from Grassroots Clubs to the Emerging Talent Centres.



GRASSROOTS CLUBS



Provide a safe, fun, and engaging environment for all abilities to play football within their local area.

England Football Accredited clubs demonstrate that they are setting the highest standards across their club.

The FA's Weetabix Wildcats: U5 – U11

An informal fun environment for girls only where they can access weekly sessions in a relaxed setting.

Mini Soccer: U7 – U10s / 5v5 & 7v7

Festivals and non-competitive fixture programmes, teams will play within a group of similar ability level teams to experience playing organised matches. Some leagues offer the opportunity for Girls Only teams to play a year group down.

Youth Football: U11s – U18s / 9v9 & 11v11

Introduction to larger formats, teams experience competitive leagues from U12, adding an introductory level of competitive football.

Open-Age: 16+ / 11v11

Adult Womens grassroots football is mostly played on Sundays within the Essex County Women's League. After promotion the next tier is the Eastern Region Womens League, then the Womens Championship and finally the WSL.

EMERGING TALENT CENTRES (ETC's)



There are a national network of over 60 Emerging Talent Centres across the country aimed at girls 8-16 years old. The new centres will commence in September 2022 and will offer a 30-week training programme and occasional festival fixtures.

The centres are funded by The FA and offer a subsidized programme improving access and providing a wider and more diverse talent pool for the game. Within Essex both Colchester United and West Ham hold Emerging Talent Licences.



ESSEX COUNTY FA SCHOOLS REPRESENTATIVE GIRLS TEAMS



The Essex County Schools FA, in partnership with Essex FA, provides the opportunity for players aged U14 & U16 to represent their school within a County schools competition. Both squads play within the South East England Schools FA league and the National Cup.

Selection is organised by Essex Schools FA through a nomination process, where PE leads nominate players to trial.



DISTRICT FOOTBALL



Players aged U11 – U15 have the opportunity to represent their geographical District (District dependant).

This is organised by each individual 'Schools District Association'.

Players will represent their District in which they go to school, not where they live.

For more information, please contact essexcountyschoolsinfo@gmail.com



GIRLS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

Many professional clubs & independent companies run Girls Only Development Centres. The programmes are set up to compliment a players' grassroots football not conflict. The following organisations delivers Girls Only Development Centres.



PROFESSIONAL CLUBS THAT NEIGHBOUR ESSEX

Professional clubs that neighbour Essex, may also provide additional opportunities within the County. Some examples may be, Arsenal, Chelsea, Ipswich Town & Tottenham Hotspur.

There is a fee for parent/carers to pay for their child to participate within this environment.

Other names used for this type of provision:
Elite Centres & Development Squads.



FOOTBALL COACHING COMPANIES

Across Essex there are multiple opportunities for grassroots players to access external coaching and playing sessions outside of their more formal offers, such as their clubs and schools.

Like Professional Clubs, many coaching companies may brand their provision as an 'Academy' or 'Elite Centre', but this does not mean they are linked to a Professional Club or hold an Academy Licence.

Currently there is no national accreditation programme for individual coaching company providers. Therefore providers should acquire their own insurance policies and ensure all coaches undertake the required safeguarding checks. Essex FA is looking at providing a local accreditation scheme in this space, with information shared in due course.

Check out the Parent/Carer checklist below for more info on coaching companies:



Parent/Carer Checklist: Are all coaches DBS checked? Do they hold FA Safeguarding & First Aid Qualifications? Does the provider have Public Liability Insurance? What FA Coaching Qualifications do they have? Have they conducted a Risk Assessment?

Creating a united grassroots environment which delivers football For All

Essex Youth Football U7 – U18

The Youth Pathway in Essex for youth players starts at U7's through to U18's and offers a range of playing experiences across the county, including 1 female youth league.

Detailed below is the analysis of Youth Football Leagues sanctioned by Essex County FA up to the current 2022-23 season.

3,862

TEAMS PARTICIPATING
ACROSS 8 YOUTH LEAGUES,
INCLUDING 376 GIRLS TEAMS

17%

INCREASE FROM
PREVIOUS SEASON



774

YOUTH TEAMS COMPETING IN
COUNTY CUP COMPETITIONS,
INCLUDING 91 GIRLS ENTRIES



1,665

MINI SOCCER TEAMS U7 – U10,
INCLUDING 115 GIRLS TEAMS

19.5%

INCREASE FROM
21-22 SEASON (1393)



OVER

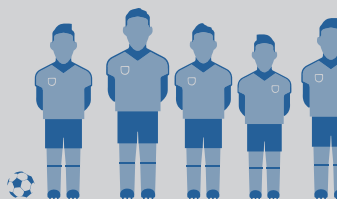
47,000

REGISTERED PLAYERS
IN YOUTH FOOTBALL,
INCLUDING CIRCA 3,300 GIRLS



2,201

YOUTH TEAMS U11 – U18,
INCLUDING 261 GIRLS TEAMS



442

VENUES BEING USED
ACROSS YOUTH FOOTBALL











Youth Football Formats:

Below is a visual of the different formats within youth football set out by The FA. The formats change as players progress through age groups with an increase in pitch and ball sizes, as well as an increase in maximum playing time. More information can be found in The FA's Youth Football Guide [HERE](#)








U7/8s



-  **Format:** 5 v 5
-  **Match length:** 20 mins E/W
-  **Player game time:**
40 mins/day, 60 mins/comp
-  **Pitch size:** 40yd x 30yd
-  **Ball size:** 3
-  **Goal size:** 12ft x 6ft
-  **COMPETITIONS**
Two weeks of trophy events, three times a season
-  **KEY LEARNINGS**
– having fun
– playing with my friends









U9/10s



-  **Format:** 7 v 7
-  **Match length:** 25 mins E/W
-  **Player game time:**
60 mins/day, 90 mins/comp
-  **Pitch size:** 60yd x 40yd
-  **Ball size:** 3
-  **Goal size:** 12ft x 6ft
-  **COMPETITIONS**
Four weeks of trophy events, three times a season
-  **KEY LEARNINGS**
– acquiring skills
– trying my best

U11/12s



-  **Format:** 9 v 9
-  **Match length:** 30 mins E/W
-  **Player game time:**
80 mins/day, 120 mins/comp
-  **Pitch size:** 80yd x 50yd
-  **Ball size:** 4
-  **Goal size:** 16ft x 7ft
-  **COMPETITIONS**
Six weeks of trophy events, three times a season. U12s as U13/14s
-  **KEY LEARNINGS**
– being part of a team
– game play





U13/14s



-  **Format:** 11 v 11
-  **Match length:** 35 mins E/W
-  **Player game time:**
100 mins/day, 150 mins/comp
-  **Pitch size:** 100yd x 60yd
-  **Ball size:** 4
-  **Goal size:** 21ft x 7ft
-  **COMPETITIONS**
Any varieties including one season-long league table
-  **KEY LEARNINGS**
– taking responsibility
– positional awareness









U15/16s



-  **Format:** 11 v 11
-  **Match length:** 40 mins E/W
-  **Player game time:**
100 mins/day, 150 mins/comp
-  **Pitch size:** 110yd x 70yd
-  **Ball size:** 5
-  **Goal size:** 24ft x 8ft
-  **COMPETITIONS**
any varieties including one season-long league table
-  **KEY LEARNINGS**
– in-game decisions
– tactical appreciation

U17/18s



-  **Format:** 11 v 11
-  **Match length:** 45 mins E/W
-  **Player game time:**
120 mins/day, 180 mins/comp
-  **Pitch size:** 110yd x 70yd
-  **Ball size:** 5
-  **Goal size:** 24ft x 8ft
-  **COMPETITIONS**
any varieties including one season-long league table
-  **KEY LEARNINGS**
– in-game decisions
– tactical appreciation

Youth Football Formats:

All Essex FA affiliated youth leagues are mixed gender leagues that allows girls to play within boys teams.

In addition some of our youth leagues have adopted a rule that allows girls teams to play down an age group within mixed leagues.



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Kim Farmer

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Paul Blackwell

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Keeley Routley

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.t.ly/Re3qO

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED - Basildon, Barking & Dagenham, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle-Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Havering, Maldon, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring, Thurrock, Uttlesford & Waltham Forest



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Michael Wood

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Jackie Leno

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Angela Owen

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.dengieyouth.co.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Maldon & Uttlesford



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – John Meates/Mike Jackson

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Peter Hockley

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Nicki Sargood

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.bcfayl.co.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Basildon, Barking & Dagenham, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle-Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Havering, Maldon, Redbridge, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock & Uttlesford



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Peter Newman

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Alan Blanchett

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – James Commins

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.colchesteranddistrictyouthleague.com

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED - Braintree, Colchester & Tendring



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Simon Marszell

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Stephen Bennett

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Madeline Northwood

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.ejafl.com

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED - Basildon, Barking & Dagenham, Brentwood, Castle-Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Harlow, Maldon, Redbridge, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock, Uttlesford & Waltham Forest



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Paul Dickinson

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Iris Fraser, Lisa Di Palma (Assistant)

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Jamie Wright

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.echoleague.co.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Basildon, Barking & Dagenham, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Thurrock & Waltham Forest



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Mark Holmes

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Ernie Franklin

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Sarah-Jane Galbally

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.seepl.co.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Basildon, Castle-point, Chelmsford, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea & Thurrock



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Chris Hockett

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Tom Clarke

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Madeline Northwood

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.sdjsfl.co.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Basildon, Castle-point, Chelmsford, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea & Thurrock



AFFILIATED TO: The FA

CHAIRPERSON – Martin Brock

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Alexander Watson

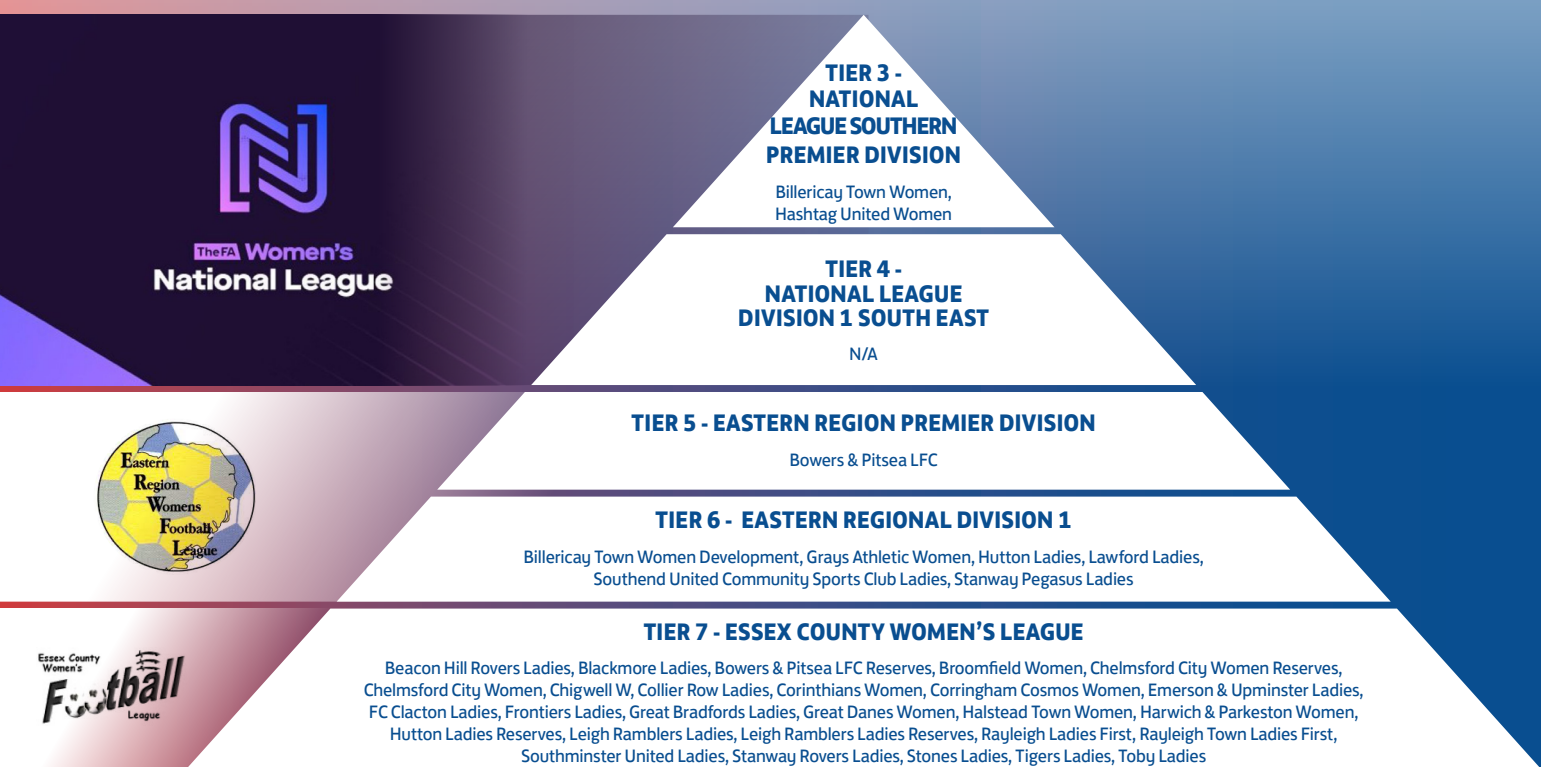
LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Pamela Johnson

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.juniorpremierleague.com

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Regional based League covering multiple County Boundaries

Women's Football Pyramid

The graphic below details the football pyramid within the Women's game for season 2023/24. Outlining the non-professional leagues where Essex FA affiliated clubs are placed within the pyramid and divisions in which they play in.



Reserve & Development teams can only progress to Tier 6 in the Pyramid. If teams are successful in their application to the promotion pool, they then can't go any higher in the Pyramid. Equally, if the 1st team were in tier 6, the two teams couldn't play in the same league so the reserve team would have to remain in the County League

Women's Open-Age Football

Essex County FA have an affiliated women's league offering competitive divisional football as well as two Essex FA female County Cup competitions, providing opportunity for all levels of the female game.



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Kim Farmer

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Dawn Barnard

LEAGUE WELFARE OFFICER – Jamie Wright

LEAGUE WEBSITE – <https://ecwfl.pitchero.com>

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Basildon, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow, Havering, Maldon, Redbridge, Rochford, Southend-On-Sea, Tendring, & Thurrock

Walking Football

Walking Football is the perfect fit for everyone who wants to play football for longer, make new friends, get out of the house and stay active.

With no running, jogging or heading – and tackling with reduced physical contact – Walking Football is a fun and safe way for players to enjoy football and socialise together.

A 5v5 format of the game, there are two walking football leagues in Essex providing opportunity for female players to play the game. Starting at Over 50's with divisions up to Over 70's.



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Derek Hornsey

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Richard Coleman

LEAGUE WEBSITE – www.essexwalkingfootball.org

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Braintree, Brentwood, Castlepoint, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow, Havering, Maldon, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring & Thurrock



AFFILIATED TO: Essex County FA

CHAIRPERSON – Cheron Robinson

LEAGUE SECRETARY – Debbie Leitch

LEAGUE WEBSITE – <https://fulltime.thefa.com/index.html?league=462871319>

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COVERED – Basildon, Harlow & Southend-on-Sea

Female Football Community

Launched in 2022/23 season, the aim of this community is to connect more effectively girls and women across Essex with an interest in coaching or refereeing.

Our hope is that we can create an environment where females involved in the game can network and share good practice, whilst also providing a support system for all females, regardless of whether you're already in the game, or a newcomer.

You can be a student looking to start your journey, a parent considering taking that step over the sidelines or a player who'd like to continue your football journey. Whatever your motivation, we want to hear from you!

Sign up here!

<https://www.essexfa.com/volunteers/female-community>

