



WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' 18+ DUAL CAREER FOOTBALL GUIDE

FOR ALL

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tass★

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INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDE

The FA funded TASS to develop a dual career framework for the women's and girl's game. The guide explores the women's dual career pathway from age 14 to the professional level. The guide is divided into three separate documents by age-group: U14-16, 16-18, and 18+.

The guide covers all football, education, and potential work activities that players may engage in. The information provided offers advice around balancing football alongside education/work and can be used to help players make informed decisions around their dual career paths. The guide also outlines key stakeholders that can offer support for players within each specific age-group and provides information on transitions and potential challenges that players may face.

To generate the information included within the guide, TASS conducted interviews and focus groups with key individuals throughout the women's football pathway. These included players and their parents, football staff at club and FA level, education providers, and other key support services, e.g. TASS, PFA. In total, 103 people were interviewed.



1.2 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

This guide provides a framework that can be used by players, parents, and education/football staff to highlight all opportunities that are available within education and football, while pin-pointing key support services at each time-point. Each individual's dual career pathway is different. This guide provides a model that can support players in navigating their various transitions successfully and finding the dual career pathway that is most suitable to them.

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WHAT IS A DUAL CAREER?



2. WHAT IS A DUAL CAREER?

2.1 DUAL CAREER: A DEFINITION

A dual career is the combination of an athletic career with education and/or work. Some examples of where football players are undertaking a dual career are as follows:

- Playing grassroots football and balancing this with school, further education, an apprenticeship, higher education, or work.
- Playing for an RTC and doing GCSEs.
- Playing for a Barclays FA WSL Academy and in further education/apprenticeship.
- Playing for a Barclays FA WSL Academy/ FA Women's Championship first team whilst studying at university.
- Playing for a Barclays FA WSL Academy/ FA Women's Championship first team whilst in additional part/full time employment.

2.2 A DUAL CAREER SHOULD...

- Be viewed as a pathway where sport and education are both valued.
- Be something that athletes are fully engaged in.
- Be promoted by the club and national staff.
- Be seen as an opportunity for an individual to reach their sporting, academic, work, and life potential.

A dual career is the combination of an athletic career with education and/or work.



2.3 BENEFITS AND VALUE OF A DUAL CAREER IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

By engaging in a dual career, players may see the following benefits:

- Expanded social networks and support systems;
- Reduced stress through being able to focus on different areas;
- Opportunity to develop identities in different areas;
- A more balanced lifestyle;
- More effective career/sport retirement planning;
- Higher employability prospects;
- Increased longevity in the sport.

Many of the skills players develop through football are transferrable into other areas of their life. If the dual career is appropriately supported, these transferrable skills can have positive effects on player's performance in GCSEs, further education, higher education and in the work environment.

It is highly unlikely for women's footballers to make a living out of their sport. It is therefore crucial for players to engage in activities that prepare them for a post football career. This emphasises the importance of engaging

in education or personal development during a football career. Engaging in a dual career will not only have short-term benefits for players (e.g. expanded support systems) but will also have significant long-term benefits (e.g. possibility of having a good vocational career and financial stability).

Over the past few years, The FA has been striving to develop dual career environments in women's football. At the forefront of this is the continued development of the Barclays FA dual career Academies.

There is education support available for players, particularly for those that are a part of the England Women's Pathway. Many coaches support the dual career philosophy, embracing the importance of engaging in another activity alongside football, e.g. education.

A number of clubs offer education support for their players and those who are a part of the England Women's Pathway will receive education support whilst on camp.



“ You pack your boots, you pack your shin pads, you pack your homework. ”

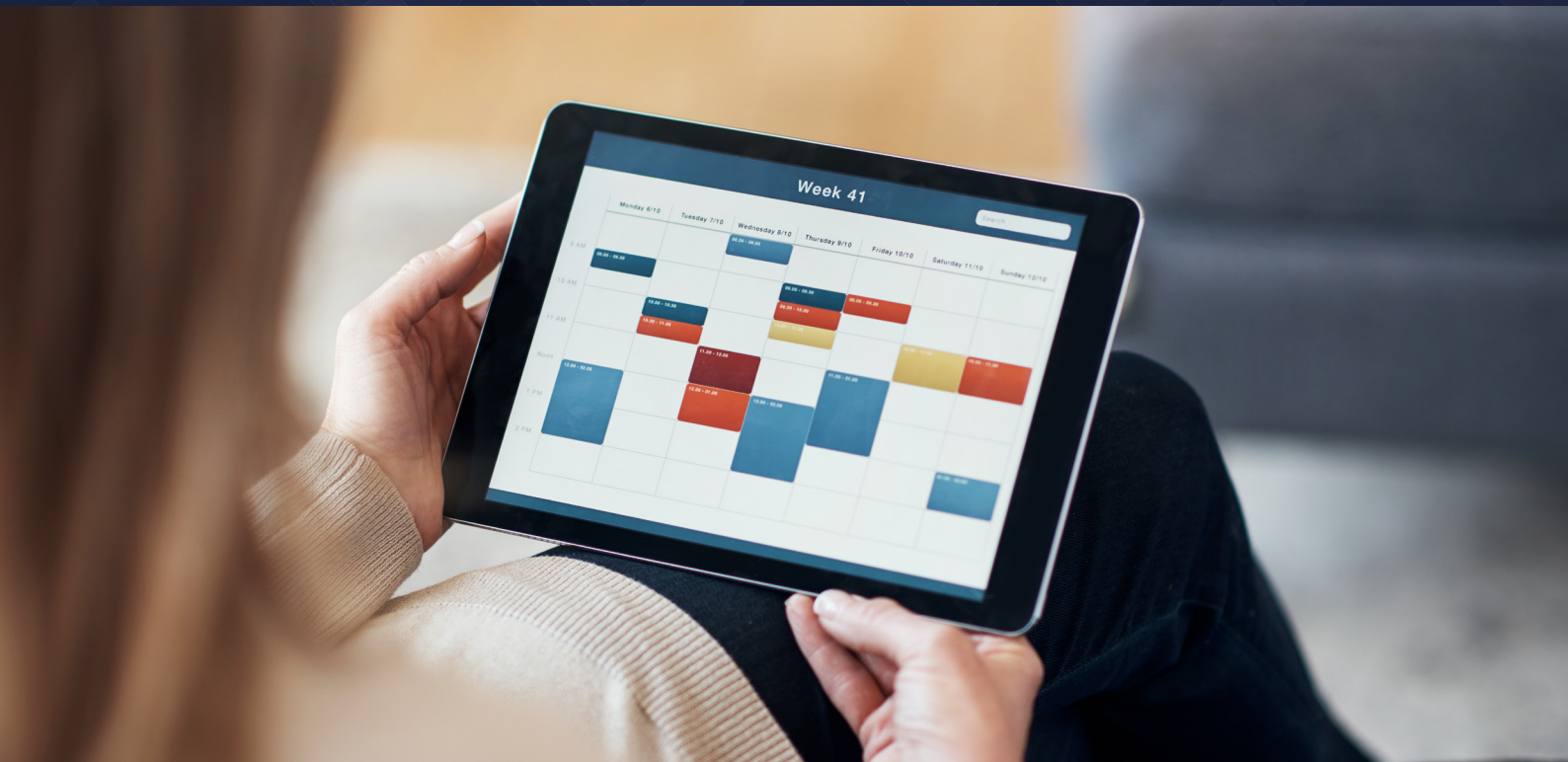
FA COACH

“ It's huge, even just on my CV, I think being an athlete you've got a lot of transferable skills and then I've been in education as well...I'm really glad that it did because it's opened so many pathways. ”

FORMER SENIOR LIONESS

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DUAL CAREER FRAMEWORK



3. DUAL CAREER FRAMEWORK

AGE GROUP		UNDER-14	UNDER-15	UNDER-16	UNDER-17	UNDER-18	UNDER-19	UNDER-20	UNDER -21	21+		
AGE		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
FOOTBALL	Club Football	Other Routes										
		Grassroots										
		RTC / ACC										
		Barclays FA WSL Academy										
		Barclays FA WSL/FA Women's Championship/FA Women's National League: Reserve/Development Teams										
	School/College/ University Football	Barclays FA WSL/FA Women's Championship/FA Women's National League Premier Division/National League Division 1										
		Non-Contracted (Under-18)						Contracted (18+)				
		School Football (Girls/Boys/Teams)				Further Education School/College Football		University Football				
England Football	Discover My Talent											
	National Talent Camp			Youth Development Phase		Professional Development Phase						
				Youth National Teams								
											Senior National Team	
EDUCATION	School Level	School Years 8-9 (Key Stage 3)										
		GCSE (Levels 1 and 2) (Key Stage 4)										
	Further Education					Further Education (Level 3) (Key Stage 5)						
						A-Levels						
						BTEC / CTEC						
						International Baccalaureate						
						Advanced Apprenticeship						
	Higher Education / Vocation					Diploma in Sporting Excellence						
						University						
						Foundation Degree (Level 5)						
				Bachelor's Degree (Level 6 - minimum 3 years)						Master's Degree (L7)		
					Higher / Degree Apprenticeship (Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7)							
	Compulsory Education					Compulsory Recognised Learning/Training/Employment in FA WSL Academy						

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18+ DUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT



4. 18+ DUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

4.1 WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PHASE?



This section will provide a brief overview of what happens from a football and education/vocational perspective within the 18+ age group.

During this phase, players may be involved in the following types of football:

5.1.1 GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL:

Women and girls grassroots football is defined as all football played in the 'For Learning' and 'For Fun' pillars. All competitive football from Tier 3 in the Women's Pyramid to Tier 7 is also included. Within the 18+ age group, this can be in the form of grassroots club football or lower tier university BUCS football.

4.1.2 THE BARCLAYS FA WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE (BARCLAYS FA WSL) ACADEMY FOOTBALL

The Barclays FA WSL Academy programme includes twelve clubs and supports over 200 players aged 16-20. The Barclays FA WSL Academy programme is geared towards balancing a female player's football development with their educational aspirations. Through partnership with the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS), Barclays FA WSL Academy clubs can receive a bespoke package of support services through a higher education institution, that may include: strength and conditioning (S&C), physiotherapy, lifestyle, psychology, and nutrition support.

For a full list of the Barclays FA WSL Academy clubs for the 2020/21 season, please see [section 5.1.2](#) on page 52.

4.1.3 THE BARCLAYS FA WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE (WSL)

The Barclays FA Women's Super League (WSL) is the highest league of women's football in England. The league is fully professional, with players being contracted to a club and earning an annual salary.

For a full list of the Barclays FA WSL clubs, please click the following [hyperlink](#).

Players contracted to Barclays FA WSL clubs have the opportunity to become a member of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA). There are a number of benefits that come with being a member of the PFA as will be discussed in section 4.6.7. Each Barclays FA WSL club will have a PFA player delegate who is responsible for sharing information from the PFA to their teammates and leading discussion with the organisation.

4.1.4 THE FA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

The FA Women's Championship is the second tier of women's football. Players may enter this league from one of the following routes:

- Already involved with a FA Women's Championship club.
- Enter following exiting a Barclays FA WSL Academy.
- Moving into an FA Women's Championship club from a Barclays FA WSL club to get more game time.
- Step up from an FA Women's National League club.

For a full list of the Barclays FA WSL clubs, please click the following [hyperlink](#).

The FA Women's Championship is a semi-professional league, with a part-time football environment. Players in the FA Women's Championship will be contracted to their club, receiving payment for participation in the team. The team that finishes top of this league at the end of the season will be promoted to the Barclays FA WSL (providing they can meet the licensing requirements).

4.1.5 PLAYERS GOING ON LOAN

During this phase, within the Barclays FA WSL or FA Women's Championship clubs, players may experience going out on loan to another club. An example of this is a Barclays FA WSL contracted player going out on loan to an FA Women's Championship club for a season. A benefit of this can be increased game time opportunities and consequently footballing development.

4.1.6 THE FA WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE

The FA Women's National League sits at the third and fourth tier of women's football. This league is split into two divisions, the Premier Division (Northern Premier Division and the Southern Premier Division) and Division One (North, Midlands, South East, and South West). For a full list of the FA Women's National League clubs, please click the following [hyperlink](#).

The FA Women's National League provides competitive first team opportunity for players of varying ages. Following Barclays FA WSL Academy football, some younger players can use the FA Women's National League as

a vehicle to get first team experience. The FA Women's National League also provides more experienced players with the opportunity to strive to play at the semi-professional level.

Each season there is a play-off between the Northern and Southern Division champions, with the winner earning promotion to the FA Women's Championship (providing they can meet the licensing requirements).

4.1.7 BUCS FOOTBALL

British University and College Sport (BUCS) is the governing body for university sport in the UK. BUCS is responsible for organising inter-university sports within the UK. Within women's football, teams compete in the Wednesday leagues and knockouts in the following Tiers:

- **Premier Tier** – North and South
- **Tier 1** – Scottish 1A, Northern 1A, Midlands 1A, Western 1A, South Eastern 1A
- **Tier 2** – Scottish 2A, Northern 2A and 2B, Midlands 2A and 2B, Western 2A and 2B, South Eastern 2A and 2B
- **Tier 3** – Scottish 3A, Northern 3A and 3B, Midlands 3A and 3B, Western 3A and 3B, South Eastern 3A and 3B

- **Tier 4** – Northern 4A and 4B, Midlands 4A, South Eastern 4A and 4B
- **Tier 5** – Northern 5B

The Premier Tier teams play 10 fixtures in the league season. This then qualifies them for the championship knockout, which is played nationally across the two Premier Tiers. These Premier Tier teams are likely to train twice a week, with possibly one day of strength and conditioning (S&C), and match days as well.

Some players will only play BUCS football, however, other players will play BUCS competition alongside their external club commitments. In some cases, BUCS football can complement a players' club football, increasing game time opportunities.

Players who have made the decision to attend university overseas may participate in the country's equivalent university football league.

4.1.8 THE WOMEN'S ENGLAND TALENT PATHWAY

4.1.8.1 Women's National Teams Under-16 to Under-20

Within the 18+ age-group, some players will remain in the Professional Development Phase of the England Women's Pathway. Players within this age group will be expected to attend numerous training camps throughout the year and attend matches/tournaments if selected.

Some of the major tournaments for players within this age group include:

- UEFA Women's Under-19 Championship (annual).
- FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup (bi-annual).

4.1.8.2 England Women's Senior National Football Team



Some players within the 18+ age group may be selected for the England Women's Senior Football Team. Within the Senior National team players will be expected to attend numerous training camps throughout the year, attend matches/tournaments if selected, and be actively involved with promotional and commercial activity. Some of the major tournaments for players within

the Senior England National Team include:

- FIFA Women's World Cup
- UEFA Women's Championship

During the 18+ age group, players may engage in one of the following educational/vocational options alongside their footballing commitments:

4.1.9 UNIVERSITY IN THE UK OR OVERSEES (UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE)

Some players may be continuing their education through higher education studies at university. In some cases, players may be a part of the Open University where they will be completing all study online. Players at the university level may be receiving academic support and flexibility to allow them to balance football with their academic studies. Some players may also be receiving sport scholarship support. This support can include strength and conditioning (S&C), physio, lifestyle, nutrition, psychology, performance analysis, medical testing/screening, financial bursaries, and financial packages.

The level of study that players can undertake includes:

- **Foundation Degree** – Usually takes two years to complete and normally students can continue for a further year to gain a full honours degree.
- **Foundation Year** – An extra year of study at the start of a university course if a player does not have the required grades to enrol on their programme of choice. This also provides students with an alternative and more gradual route into university.

- **Undergraduate** – An undergraduate degree is a minimum of three years and can be extended at the university's discretion.
- **Master's** – Some undergraduate degrees are quite broad, whereas master's degrees tend to be more specifically focused on one particular topic area. Within a master's degree a player can acquire further knowledge, qualifications or skills to pursue a particular career. A master's degree is a minimum of one year or can be extended at the university's discretion.
- **PhD** – A PhD is an abbreviation for 'Doctor of Philosophy' and is a degree awarded to people who have done advanced research into a particular subject. A PhD is typically completed within three to eight years.

4.1.10 APPRENTICESHIPS / VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Players within this age group may be following an apprenticeship route. On an apprenticeship, an individual combines working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job. The level of apprenticeship will differ from player to player depending upon their previous level of study, but may include:

- Advanced apprenticeship
- Higher apprenticeship
- Degree apprenticeship

For detailed information on each of the different types of apprenticeship, please refer to the 16-18 section.

4.1.11 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

Players may decide not to attend formal education programmes, however, may continue their personal and professional development through undertaking personal development programmes. These courses can be in a variety of different subject areas, examples may include:

- 1st4Sport qualifications
- Coaching badges
- Refereeing qualifications
- Languages
- Short courses (e.g. mental health first aid, personal training, first aid).

4.1.12 PART OR FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Players within this age group may be involved within part or full-time employment alongside their footballing pursuits. This may include players who have made the decision to not enrol in higher education studies/ apprenticeships, or those players who have graduated from their chosen educational route.

- Players in Barclays FA WSL Academies must be enrolled in a recognised programme of learning or training. These players may do some part-time work alongside this, however, due to time commitments of study and training this is often uncommon.
- For players within the Barclays FA WSL, football is their full-time employment so they are unlikely to be involved in any other formal employment outside of this. Some players may, however, take on some paid or unpaid work experience that helps to prepare them for their post-football vocational career.
- Depending upon club commitments, players within FA Women's Championship clubs may be involved in part or full-time employment alongside their football commitments.
- Players within the FA Women's National League are likely to be involved in full-time employment, with football commitments typically occurring in the evenings.

4.1.13 RETIREMENT FROM COMPETITIVE FOOTBALL

Within this phase players will eventually retire from their footballing career. Some players may continue to play in lower level competition, coaching, or as part of the wider workforce. The age of retirement will vary from player to player, with some voluntarily retiring (e.g. achieved everything they want to within the sport) and others retiring involuntarily (e.g. through career ending injury, or loss of contract).

Following retirement, players who were in the Senior England team, may continue to be involved within England football through areas such as commercial opportunities. Many of these players become involved in the Lionesses' Legends Programme.

4.2 KEY INDIVIDUALS AND STAKEHOLDERS THAT CAN FACILITATE DUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE 18+ PHASE

4.2.1 FAMILY AND PEERS

Family and peer support can be vital during this phase, particularly during key times in the players career. These may include: the lead up to major tournaments, club changes, injury, and retirement. Family and peers can be key in providing emotion support and advice around key decisions.



4.2.2 CLUB STAFF

Within players' clubs they will come into contact with various different members of staff. Please note that the titles of these members of staff will differ, however, the roles they have will be similar across clubs.

- **Club Manager/Technical Director:** Responsible for the running and functioning of the team.
- **Coaches:** Individual coaches working to support players physical, technical, tactical, and psychological development.
- **Education role:** Some clubs will have an education staff member/s who is responsible for supporting players educational development, through collaboration with the player and their further education institution.
- **Wider club staff:** Some clubs will have a wider support network to provide additional support to players in a variety of different areas (e.g. welfare, sports science, medical support).

- **Commercial, marketing, and communications roles:** Some clubs may have an individual responsible for coordinating commercial, marketing, and media opportunities.

4.2.3 UNIVERSITY STAFF

Every university operates very differently. It is important for players to be aware of the unique individual roles of each staff member, as these can differ between institutions.

- **Lecturers:** Individual lecturers across different subjects that may be a key point of contact for arranging academic flexibility.
- **Personal Tutor:** The main point of contact for players regarding academic matters. They may be able to facilitate support or flexibility for the player as required.
- **Central Services:** Each university's central services will be able to support players in a wide range of areas, including: mental health and wellbeing, accommodation, careers, and financial support.



- **Coaching staff:** For players that are involved in BUCS football, they will have an individual football coach that will support the teams football development.
- **Wider sports performance staff:** Players may also have access to sports performance staff in the following areas: nutrition, psychology, performance analysis, medical testing, and physiotherapy.
- **Lifestyle advisor:** Players may have access to specialist lifestyle support staff who have been upskilled to support the players' wider lifestyle needs.

4.2.4 FA STAFF



Players that are a part of the England National Squads may encounter a number of FA members of staff in differing roles, covering football, education/wellbeing and also marketing and commercial.

EDUCATION:

- **Player Education Manager:** Provides academic support/compensatory education to national team players (under-16s–under-19s) when on events. Co-ordinates the work of travelling teachers on events and communicates directly with players' education providers.
- **Player Education Officer:** Provides education support to national team players. Education time is provided on events with players working independently.

MARKETING AND COMMERCIAL:

- **Marketing and Commercial Manager – England Women's Player Liaison:** Provides support for senior Lioness players managing and coordinating commercial and marketing opportunities.

FOOTBALL

(predominantly on-camp support, but may do some work in the club environments):

- **Women's Professional Development Phase Manager:** Responsible for the under-18s and under-19s within the England Women's Pathway.
- **National Team Head Coaches:** Full-time head coaches are allocated to the youth national teams and the senior team.

4.2.5 TASS STAFF



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- **TASS Practitioners:** Players at Barclays FA WSL Academy clubs (that have opted into support) receive a package of support services from TASS and will come into contact with TASS practitioners in their area of speciality, e.g. medical, strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, lifestyle, nutrition, and psychology. In addition, players outside of the Barclays FA WSL Academies may also receive direct support through TASS at their nearest TASS delivery site.

4.2.6 EMPLOYERS

- A key stakeholder for players who are also in work will be their employer and wider staff members. In some circumstances, employers may provide support for player to facilitate their football commitments (e.g. flexible working). Please note, however, such circumstances are quite uncommon and dependent on the type of job.

4.2.7 INTERMEDIARIES OR SPONSORS

- Players who are aged 18+ may have an intermediary that works to support players with their contractual decisions, sponsorship deals, and/or commercial opportunities. Please note that in some cases, intermediaries are referred to as agents.

4.2.8 PFA STAFF

- **PFA staff members:** Players who are contracted to Barclays FA WSL clubs can have access to support from the Professional Footballers Association (PFA). The PFA offers a range of different support services through specialist members of staff. For more information on the specific services offered please see section 4.6.7.
- **PFA Delegate:** A PFA delegate is appointed by the players at each Barclays FA WSL club to act as a point of contact between the Association and its members.



4.3 THINGS TO CONSIDER

4.3.1 TAKING OWNERSHIP OF MANAGING OWN DUAL CAREER



Prior to this phase, support staff will play a big role in proactively supporting players, for example, support staff will facilitate the timings of sessions and teachers will be more proactive in providing feedback and one-to-one support. Players within the 18+ phase are expected to take ownership of their dual career and reach out for advice and support where it is needed. An example of this is when

a player is struggling to manage all of their football and university commitments, and they must proactively reach out for help from their lifestyle advisor instead of the advisor continually checking in on the player.

Players at university may be offered a sport scholarship package that contains various different services. It is the responsibility of the individual player to receive the maximum possible impact from all the services available. It is important for players to understand the role each of the different support services provide and have knowledge of how to contact the different practitioners. Players who are proactive in reaching out for support may find the dual career process more manageable and will often see better outcomes in their football and education as a result.

4.3.2 BUILDING FOR POST-FOOTBALL CAREER

4.3.2.1 Using Free time for personal/professional development

For players at university it is important to consider how they might maximise their time outside of football and education. The university environment is full of different opportunities that are often not fully utilised. These opportunities can be really important to gain experience for the players future vocational career. Some examples of these opportunities are as follows:

- Becoming involved with a university committee or society (e.g., art society)
- Taking on any work experience opportunities through engaging with careers services.
- Taking on coaching or refereeing opportunities.

For those who are full-time, professional players, it is important to maximise the use of free time within the day. Most clubs have breaks between training sessions or finish early. Players should consider using this time to develop their CV and prepare for a post-sport career. Some examples of things players can do, include:

- Work shadowing.
- Setting up partnerships.
- Undertaking short courses.
- Public speaking events to build their profile.

Professional players should not be negligent in preparing for the future, even if they feel they are currently in a comfortable financial position. dual career development should be integrated into the players entire career. This will be a huge benefit when players eventually retire from the sport, increasing the vocational opportunities that will be available.

4.3.3 TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS FROM FOOTBALL TO THE WORKPLACE

It is important for players to be aware of the transferrable skills they have developed through their football career and how these can be applied to their future vocational career. Examples of these transferrable skills include:

- **Adaptability:** Athletes can adjust their focus to ensure their skills help their team in the best possible way.
- **Recovery:** Athletes respond from setback, taking failures on board and learning from the experience.
- **Composure:** Athletes deliver under pressure due to working in high pressure environments on a daily basis.
- **Discipline:** Athletes are dedicated to following rigorous schedules where time management is key.

4.3.4 BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN DEGREE AND EMPLOYMENT

For players who complete a university degree and then go on to become a full-time professional player, one of the key challenges that many players may face is the skills gap between study and their vocational career. Over the course of their football career, players may lose touch with the information and skills developed through their time at university, which means for many this may lead to a knowledge gap, pushing them down the employment ladder. This means that when players do eventually retire from professional football, they could be starting at a lower level than others at the same age as them, due to a lack of work experience and up-to-date development.

To overcome this, players should actively engage in personal development during the time between leaving university and retiring from competitive football. This development can help players stay involved in their field of choice and keep them up to date, so they experience a smoother transition from professional football to employment.

4.3.5 CLUB CONTRACTS AND INTERMEDIARIES

Players at the Barclays FA WSL or FA Women's Championship level may make the decision to work with an intermediary. An intermediary is a representative who handles the interests of players, i.e. negotiating club contracts and securing commercial deals. There are numerous factors that players should consider when deciding to use an intermediary or changing the intermediary they are currently working with. These factors include:

- Players must read the small print. Do they really know what they are agreeing to by working with a particular intermediary?
- What cost will the intermediary be taking for their services?
- Does the intermediary consider the players dual career aspirations? Will potential contracts enable the player to study or work alongside football?
- Do they have the players best interests in mind? Do they consider a players needs as a person as well as a footballer?
- Has the player researched a range of different intermediaries and gained feedback from other players who have used the same intermediary?

When considering signing a club contract, players should factor in the following areas from a dual career perspective:

- What is the length of the contract? How does this match with the players work or education commitments? (i.e. does it span the duration of the player's university studies).
- Is the level of pay enough to support the player and anyone else that relies on their income?
- Has the player mapped the contract against their work commitments? Will it be sustainable to balance the requirements within the football contract with other commitments?
- Has the player had conversations with the club around the personal development or education opportunities they wish to engage with during their time on the contract?



4.3.6 COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES



Players aged 18+ are likely to be asked to support their club's and/or England marketing and commercial priorities. Such opportunities can be a great way to raise a player's profile and build their experience and profile for future career opportunities. These opportunities may include the following:

- Club promotional materials (i.e. school visits);
- Club/England commercial partner activity;
- Club events, i.e. networking days.

Players may also have the opportunity to receive personal sponsorship deals. Below are some key things to consider when looking to accept or decline a deal:

- Is it a credible company/organisation that the player would be happy to represent?
- What will the player be required to do when sponsored by a particular company/organisation, i.e. promote products or services, wear particular boots, attend promotional events?

- What will the player receive as part of the partnership, i.e. free products/kit, finances?
- Are there any clauses in the sponsorship deal?
- What are the terms of the sponsorship, i.e. how long is the sponsorship for?
- What are the renewal and termination regulations of the sponsorship?
- How will this sponsorship deal impact on any current or future sponsors and their club sponsors?

4.4 DECISIONS AND OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

4.4.1 CHOOSING WHETHER TO COMPETE IN BUCS WHEN AT UNIVERSITY

As discussed in the above section, BUCS' football is an option for players whilst at university. BUCS' football may involve between approximately one to three training sessions a week, with a match on a Wednesday afternoon either at home or away at another university.

Players may, however, decide not to train with the university team and instead just engage in match days. Some key areas of consideration surrounding BUCS participation include:



“Playing BUCS' football helped me mentally to find my love for football again.”

BUCS AND FA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYER

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN THE DECISION	DETAILS
Sport Scholarship criteria	Many sport scholarships will require players to either complete in all BUCS' training and matches, or a proportion of matches (please refer back to the HE sport scholarship document for individual university requirements). If players do not compete in BUCS, this may result in some players not receiving a sport scholarship at particular universities.
Club standpoint on BUCS	Some clubs do not want/allow their players to compete in BUCS because this may mean they are unavailable for club training or at an increased risk of developing an injury.
Individual benefits	For some players, BUCS can provide a great social experience when they meet new friends and get the opportunity to travel around the country in and compete against various university teams. Some players have outlined that BUCS' football has given them a new passion and desire for the sport that they had previously lost.
Game time	For players who may receive limited game time at their club, BUCS can provide an opportunity to get vital minutes on the pitch and therefore can play a big role in their football development.
Access to services and facilities	Being part of a BUCS first team can allow players to have access to high quality services and facilities at the university, including: strength and conditioning sessions and physiotherapy.
Player load	For players who do make the decision to compete in both BUCS and club football, they should consider the training and competition load in relation to their injury and burnout risk, as well as the impact on their time commitments (i.e. university studies, and social time).
Further playing opportunities	For players who are not currently part of a club outside of university, BUCS' coaches and support staff often have links to external clubs and can provide opportunities for players to exit university and play for that club.

4.4.2 CLUB CHOICE

When deciding which club to play for, players should consider the following points when making this decision from a dual career perspective:

- What value does the club place upon education and personal development?
- Is there a strong club culture on learning and developing outside of football?
- What support and staff are available at the club to help facilitate dual career aspirations?
- What time allocations do the club put forward to allow education or work opportunities (e.g. does the club allow player to take time during the day to attend university lectures?)
- Are there opportunities at the club to engage in work experience or work shadowing?

4.4.3 WHETHER TO BECOME A PFA MEMBER:



Players that are contracted to Barclays FA WSL clubs have the opportunity to become members of the PFA. There are numerous benefits to becoming a member as are outlined in section 4.6.7. From a dual career perspective, one of the major benefits that players may receive includes financial support for programmes of study.

PFA membership costs £150 per year, with a £20 joining fee to be paid once only. The benefits of being a PFA member far outweigh the annual costs. In addition, players are members for life (regardless of the length

or their playing career) and can access ongoing support both during and in the years following their playing career.

It is really important for players to be proactive in using the services that the PFA provide and not only use the services reactively. *'It's a no-brainer!'*

“There’s so much more on offer from the PFA that people don’t realise. I did a level 3 vocational course last year and the PFA funded 50% of it. Players just don’t necessarily know what’s out there.”
FORMER PFA WSL PLAYER

4.4.4 NEXT STEPS IN EDUCATION/VOCATION

4.4.4.1 Undergraduate study

For players who are not already enrolled in university, it is never too late to undertake a programme of study. The programme of study may include a traditional university route, or a more hands-on degree apprenticeship. For more information on what to consider when deciding which university to attend and which subject to choose, please refer back to the 16-18 phase. For players that make the decision to follow a degree route, it is important that this is something they want to do. Those who have a 100% focus on football and are doing their degree because it is something they've been told to do, won't handle the dual career challenges as successfully as those who place equal importance on their studies.

For some players, the Open University may be a desirable route. The Open University offers flexible part-time study, supported distance and open learning for undergraduate and postgraduate courses and qualifications.

Benefits of the Open University include:

- Professional players who experience difficulty finding time to physically attend university lectures can arrange to work at a time that best suits them.
- Players will be able to access online support through one-to-one Skype sessions with a tutor, as well as group webinar sessions anywhere in the world.



4.4.4.2 Postgraduate study

For players who have already completed their university degree, one of the key considerations they may have to make is whether they want to pursue postgraduate study. The Open University is also an option for postgraduate study. One of the key benefits of a postgraduate degree is that players will develop greater knowledge and understanding within a specific area that can help with their future career aspirations. Employers often see postgraduate study in a positive light, because it means individuals have developed more enhanced skills such as critical thinking and project management. A second benefit is that players may have continued access to support services, such as strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, and lifestyle. Examples of postgraduate study include master's degrees and PhDs.

4.4.4.3 Master's degree

Some areas to help players decide whether a master's degree is the route for them are as follows:

Does the master's degree align with a players desired career path?

- If they are unsure what career path they want to go down and are choosing a master's degree as 'waiting time' to allow them to figure out what they want to do or to stay in the university environment, a master's degree may not be the right decision for the player.
- A player should ask themselves the question, will a master's degree make them more employable or give them a better chance of taking the career path that they are interested in? If the player had a lifestyle advisor in their university and/or at their club, they should discuss this decision with them.

Have they considered how they will balance football with their master's degree?

- The level of contact hours on a master's degree can vary between universities and courses, the player should make sure that they understand what the level of contact time looks like before they sign up and how this might fit in with their playing schedule.
- Even if contact hours are low, the player will be expected to do lot of independent work outside of this, which will be of a higher level than their undergraduate degree.

Have they considered the financial implications?

- Undertaking a master's degree will mean that the player will face further tuition fees. Players may be able to receive some financial support, such as a sport scholarship or part-funded fees through the PFA.
- Players may also encounter other costs such as travel fees getting to and from university/training and costs related to additional equipment/books if these are required for the course.

Is the player interested in and motivated to learn more about their chosen field?

- At undergraduate level, players may have covered much broader subjects, whereas a master's will cover a specific topic in greater detail.
- Players will be expected to take on more challenging material and more responsibility. They should be prepared to produce a much longer and more detailed research project than at the undergraduate level.



4.4.4.4 PhD

A PhD is a research project in a very specific area of study, where students can take on projects that have already been designed by a university, or they can develop their own ideas and develop a research proposal.



When making the decision around undertaking a PhD, players should consider:

- That a PhD is a minimum of three years when completed full-time and is therefore a huge commitment to undertake from both a financial and personal perspective. If a player is taking on a PhD part-time, this can take up to a maximum of eight years.
- Whether they have the means to fund the PhD tuition fees and living expenses by themselves, or whether they have the opportunity to apply for a PhD studentship. Studentship opportunities can be found on a number of university or employment websites (e.g. [indeed.co.uk](https://www.indeed.co.uk)).
- How interested they are in their chosen topic of study and whether it links to their future career aspirations. It is important to recognise that students will be immersed in this topic of study for three years or more!
- That a PhD can be a lonely experience, particularly if the player is not in close proximity to the university they are enrolled in and are not in regular contact with other PhD students.

For players who do decided to carry out a PhD, below are some top tips:

- Make sure that players support network (e.g. coach, teammates), are aware of the demands of a PhD and the challenges they are facing.
- Be strict with time. In comparison to undergraduate and master's study, a PhD is largely independent and it is down to the student how they structure their day, i.e. whether this is a traditional 9am to 5pm day or structured around training commitments.
- Find great supervisors that not only challenge the player academically but understand and support the players sporting commitments.
- Consider other work opportunities outside of the PhD, i.e. teaching or marking.
- The final few months will be stressful and may interrupt a player's training and competition schedules.
- Motivation for a PhD may fluctuate – It is important for players to keep their goals in mind and not be afraid to take a few days off if required.

4.4.4.5 Part-time or full-time employment

Some players may make the decision to enter the world of work and combine this with their football commitments.

Depending upon the individual this employment may be full- or part-time, with a players footballing commitments having an impact upon this for example:

- Full or part-time employment alongside semi-professional FA Women's Championship football;
- Full-time employment alongside FA Women's National League football.

Some of the reasons why players may make the decision to enter employment are as follows:

- Financially they need the income and don't make enough money through football to support themselves and those that rely on their income;
- They are not interested in undertaking further study and instead want to enter the world of work;
- They are keen to start developing their vocational career, for example, they may have experienced a lot of injuries and want to begin preparations for their future;
- They may lack awareness of opportunities to combine higher education study and football;
- They may not have been offered a professional contract and therefore must begin alternative work.



4.4.5 FULL-TIME FOOTBALLER

For some players, the desired step following further education or completion of university studies is to become a full-time football player. This is a step that players who are offered professional contracts within Barclays FA WSL teams may make. For these players football is their employment, however, it is really important to consider undertaking some form of professional development (e.g. part-time university, work experience, short courses). If players are deciding to only play football full-time, some things they should consider include:

- Is their salary enough to support their daily living, as well as saving for the future?
- Are they at the stage in their life where they want to buy a house, and if so, can they get a mortgage?
- Are they investing in a pension scheme?
- How are they using their free time? Do they have time to undertake something other than football?
- Are they actively developing other identities outside of football or are they remaining in the football bubble?
- Do they have a future plan for the event of injury or loss of contract?

4.4.6 FOOTBALL RETIREMENT

Players will at some point, end up retiring from competitive football. Players may retire from competitive sport for a number of different reasons:

- **Injury:** This may be one career ending injury, or a series of injuries that halt progression in the sport.
- **Finances:** Players may be struggling to live on a footballing salary and aspire to earn more money through an alternative vocational route.
- **Ready to move on:** Players may have achieved all they had wanted in the sport (e.g. winning multiple honours) and are ready for the next phase in their life.
- **Start a family:** A player may decide they want to start a family and do not want to continue playing alongside this.
- **Loss of enjoyment:** A player may no longer feel fulfilled by football anymore and decide to take on a new path.
- **Deselection or loss of contract:** A player may lose their professional contract and decide that they do not want to continue playing at a different club or at a lower level.







For some players, they may have a definitive end to their career, where others may go through the process gradually over several years, i.e. moving down to lower levels of the football pyramid. Despite retiring from competitive football, players may decide to continue playing recreationally or stay involved in the sport through coaching, refereeing, administration, or being an ambassador.

4.5 POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

4.5.1 CHALLENGES PLAYERS MAY EXPERIENCE COMBINING UNIVERSITY STUDY AND FOOTBALL

Balancing university studies and high-level football can be challenging, with players facing a number of different demands. These challenges, their explanations, examples, and best-practice methods to overcome them are as follows:

CHALLENGE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE	BEST PRACTICE TO OVERCOME CHALLENGE
Limited time	The perception that there is limited time to complete everything required of the player.	A player may have a number of upcoming assignment deadlines, whilst also training for an important league match and feel like they need to sacrifice one area.	 <p><i>Look at time management strategies, such as prioritisation using a priority matrix: 'Do first, do next, do later, don't do'. Reach out for support from a lifestyle advisor, personal tutor, or coach who could help the player plan their time more effectively.</i></p>
Conflicting expectations	Conflicting expectations for different stakeholders.	A player's club may expect them to attend training, but the university lecturer had required them to compete a task for the next morning.	 <p><i>Communication is key! The player has a responsibility to communicate effectively to all their stakeholders and make them aware of any conflicts. The player may also benefit from putting stakeholders into contact with each other to help manage expectations (e.g. club coach and sport scholarship manager).</i></p>
Missing time at university	Players may miss long periods of time at university due to training commitments or time spent away from university at training camps and tournaments.	Players may miss practical sessions, not have the opportunity to ask in-lecture questions and become isolated from the social aspect of university.	 <p><i>If a player knows in advance that they will miss a crucial time at university, they should communicate this with their personal tutor or lecturer to arrange a suitable time to catch up. If players do have the opportunity to attend a lecture in person, they should make the most of this.</i></p>

CHALLENGE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE	BEST PRACTICE TO OVERCOME CHALLENGE
Social pressures	Pressures to engage in social activities that can hinder players football and academic development. This can lead to players priorities to become skewed.	A player may feel pressure to go on a night out even though they have an important club match the next day.	 <p><i>A player should bear in mind that it is a good thing to socialise, however, they can do this in ways that are conducive to their goals. A good way to manage social pressures is to try and help peers understand their footballing goals and commitments.</i></p>
Personal challenges	Personal challenges outside of university and football that could impact on performance in both pursuits.	A player may experience a challenging family situation, such as a bereavement or a divorce.	 <p><i>Players should utilise the support systems that are available to them, communicating any personal challenges with individuals such as coaches or a lifestyle advisor. These support systems will be well placed to guide the players through the challenging time.</i></p>
Travel	Players may have to travel long distances between their university, club, and home, adding an additional demand and expense for players.	A player moves clubs part way through their university degree, which adds as additional 45 minutes to their commute per day.	 <p><i>Players should be smart about their travel, for example travelling by train instead of driving to allow the player to complete some university work on the journey. Players that do drive should try to avoid rush hour where possible (e.g. leaving home 30 minutes earlier for a much shorter commute).</i></p>
Setbacks	Players may experience setbacks in football or in education which may then negatively impact on the other aspect of their dual career.	A player may be deselected from their club programme and the negative emotions surrounding this could impact upon their education.	 <p><i>Players should make themselves aware of the support available to them in both football and education, making use of this support if required. It is important for players to share concerns with those around who may be able to develop strategies to move forwards in a positive manner.</i></p>

4.5.2 BUCS PARTICIPATION



One of the major challenges that talented young footballers face when they are university is the conflict around BUCS participation. As previously noted, many players may be required to compete in BUCS to fulfil their sport scholarship obligations.

However, some clubs with contracted players do not allow, or are not comfortable with their players competing in BUCS due to potential injury or burnout risks. This conflict is a key challenge for some players who want to do both and may feel they have to sacrifice one over the other.

Please note that there are a number of universities in England that do not require players to participate in BUCS to be eligible for receipt of sport scholarship support. For more detailed information on individual universities, please refer to the [HE Sport Scholarship and Academic Flexibility document](#).



Best practice is for the player to be mindful this before they accept a sport scholarship at university or before they sign a club contract. An example of best practice to overcome this challenge is for club and university staff to have a conversation before a player starts competing for both teams to find a compromise where both commitments can be fulfilled without overloading the player. For example, a player may not train with the university team but may play matches on a Wednesday afternoon. Another example may be a player who only plays the home matches for the university side, reducing the time they spend travelling.

4.5.3 TRANSITION OUT OF UNIVERSITY

The transition out of university is a key period within an individual's life, where they may experience some of the following challenges:

- **Loss or change of support network:** Whilst at university players may have access to a large support network (e.g. strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, lifestyle, nutrition) if they are on a sport scholarship programme or part of a BUCS first team. Players may experience a change in their support system when they leave university and may have to adapt to working with different practitioners and differing levels of support.
- **Uncertainty:** Players may face an uncertain period where they have to begin thinking about important decisions around which route they want to take next.
- **Financial independence:** Upon leaving university, players may experience a loss in the level of financial assistance they receive (e.g. loss of sport scholarship bursary, student loan, addition of council tax, reduction in parental financial support). Players need to take more responsibility for sourcing their own income.
- **Loss of flexibility and transition to employment:** Within university, players' timetables can be fairly flexible to allow footballing commitments to be met. This can be very different in the world of work, where a player may not have the time they received whilst at university.



Best practice is for players to utilise the support they have at university to prepare for the transition. For example, network with members of staff to prepare for job opportunities, schedule meetings with the lifestyle advisor or central services to make a career plan. This may involve how to search for a job, producing a strong CV, and job interview preparation.

Players should prepare for the loss of support by reaching out to the club to see what support they can offer (e.g. if a player knows they will need physiotherapy for a long-term injury, can the club now take control of supporting the player through this?)



4.5.4 CHALLENGES PLAYERS MAY EXPERIENCE COMBINING EMPLOYMENT AND FOOTBALL

Employment is, in many cases, less flexible than education in terms of the balance with high-level football. Although there are now a lot of opportunities for players to successfully combine their education with their football (e.g. sport scholarship programmes at university providing academic flexibility), there are very few opportunities within the workplace for athletes to have similar levels of flexibility. Players will be required to be able work during their allocated hours and fit their football training around this (e.g. in the evening).

“Players have left clubs because they simply cannot fit their flex their work commitments. It is a massive decision for players to say ‘you know what look I can’t do it’ because they can see the club and level of performance increasing, but can’t keep up the level alongside employment.”

**FORMER FA WOMEN’S
CHAMPIONSHIP CLUB
MANAGER**



Best practice is for players to be mindful of their wellbeing and not put this at risk. It is incredibly important for players in employment to consider their work-life-football balance and regularly reflect on how they are managing this. If players are struggling with this balance and notice negative impacts on their wellbeing, they should reach out to those within their support network.

Many FA Women’s Championship and FA Women’s National League clubs will train several times a week in the evenings. This means that many players must travel straight from work to training, in some cases not having time to sit down and eat dinner.

In some occasions, players may have to leave work early to travel to away matches or certain training sessions. Many players will have to take unpaid leave to fulfil these club commitments.

To accommodate all their footballing commitments, some players may only be able to take on part-time employment. This employment may be on a casual basis, including zero-hour contracts that can often be unreliable. Some players may also be unable to find part-time employment in their desired profession. As a result, this can stall a player’s professional development in their preferred area.



Best practice is for players to be mindful of these challenges before signing a contract. Players should consider all football opportunities that are available to them and determine which one fits better alongside their employment goals. Players should also speak to club staff to see if any flexible arrangements can be made with training that supports their work hours.

A further challenge from a dual career perspective that may be faced by FA Women's Championship players is how their lifestyle could change if the club is promoted to the fully-professional Barclays FA WSL. Clubs within this league are full-time professional teams and have increased training commitments with players expected to train daily. This can influence a player's ability to continue within their employment if they wish to take up the opportunity in professional football.

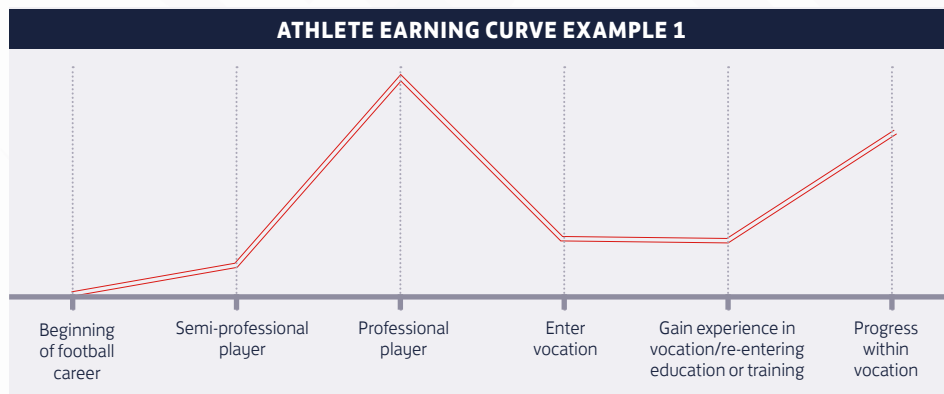
Best practice is for players to consider their goals in both football and in their future vocation to make an informed choice of what will be the best route for them. Some players may wish to continue their current employment and move to another FA Women's Championship club, other players may have the desire to experience playing football professionally. Some key areas of consideration include: finances, family, aspirations after football.

4.5.5 ATHLETE EARNING CURVE

Players are likely to experience a growth in their salary as they become more experienced and their level increases, i.e. a move from the FA Women's Championship to the Barclays FA WSL.

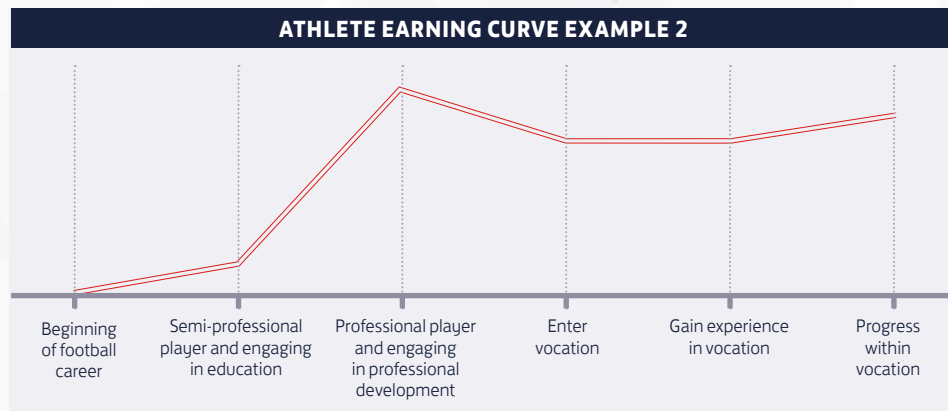
A challenge for many players is the dip they face following retirement from the sport. It is recognised that some players have not prepared to leave football and move into the world of employment. This means that some players will be entering employment at the bottom of the ladder due to a lack of qualification or a lack of continued professional development through their time

as a professional player. This skills gap means that players are not at the same employment level of other individuals of a similar age and can lead to a significant dip in the salary they earn through employment in comparison to what they received as a footballer. This can lead to challenges for some players (e.g. maintaining a mortgage, supporting a family, maintaining a desired lifestyle). It is likely to take these players a period of time to build the experience they need to climb the employment ladder which eventually will lead to a more substantial salary. For a visual representation of this, please see [Athlete Earning Curve Example 1](#).



For players that do focus on developing professionally throughout their football career, i.e. through engaging in work experience and continued professional development, this skills gap is much smaller. As a result, players experience a much smaller dip in the salary they earn following retirement from professional football. These

players may have the opportunity to begin employment much higher up the ladder due to their level of education and skill development. For a visual representation of this, please see [Athlete Earning Curve Example 2](#).



Best practice is for players to continually engage in work experience and continued professional development whilst playing football, to effectively bridge the skills gap and reduce the challenges that players may face from sudden changes in salary.



4.5.6 RETIREMENT FROM FOOTBALL

Retirement from football can be seen as an opportunity for players to open a new chapter of their life. Many players may experience this change as one that is positive and exciting. However, it can be a significantly challenging period within a player's career. There are a number of factors that might impact the experience of players retiring from the sport:

- **Level of preparation for retirement:**
Has the player engaged in a dual career? Do they have the level of education required for their desired profession?
- **Strength of player's athletic identity:**
Players who have failed to develop multiple identities within their playing career (e.g. as a student or coach), are likely to face a more challenging transition out of football. Athletes should avoid identity foreclosure, which is a stage of self-identity discovery in which a player has an identity but hasn't explore other options or ideas.
- **Available support networks:** Players that have an individual to help guide them through the transition and identify key points they need to action, are likely to experience a smoother retirement. Family, peer, and coach support is key during



this time within a player's life, as they may experience difficulty moving on and adapting to their new life.

- **Voluntary v. involuntary retirement:**
Players who have an involuntary retirement, i.e. through career ending injury, are more likely to face difficulties in the retirement process due to the unplanned nature of the transition. In addition, players may have the added disappointment of not having had the

opportunity to fulfil everything they wanted to within their career.

Following retirement from football, players may face the following challenges:

- **Being behind in the job market:** Players may face the challenge of transitioning from being at the top of the game in women's football, to being at a much lower level within a different vocation.

- **Loss of identity:** When players have been involved within football for the majority of their lives, the identity of being a footballer will be very well ingrained. When players transition out of competitive football, a major challenge that players experience is a loss of identity and a lack of clarity regarding who they now are.
- **Wellbeing issues:** The loss of identity as a high-level athlete can often bring about a lot of negative emotions. If not managed appropriately, players may experience challenge with their wellbeing, in some cases these may lead to issues with mental health and addiction.
- **Feeling alone:** Some players may feel alone during this transition due to the loss of support networks they had within football. Players may feel the emotions they are experiencing are not normal, without recognising that this is something many athletes' experiences when retiring from sport.
- **Loss of structure:** Players may be used to the regimented athlete lifestyle, where often it is dictated by a coach or wider support staff, what their daily schedule will look like. When players retire, they may have to adapt to a new structure or routine where they have to adapt to different activities occurring during different times of the day.
- **Impact on player's wider support network:** For most of a player's life, their wider support network, such as family, partner, personal coach, will have been immersed within the football environment. Retirement from football can also impact upon them due to potential shifts within their lifestyle as well.

“The biggest challenge entering employment has been the transition from being at the top of my game within football, to beginning a junior role within my job, where I have to learn the ropes and work my way up.”

**FORMER SENIOR
ENGLAND LIONESS**



Best practice is for players to continue education/personal development alongside their football career. This prevents identity challenges following retirement from the sport and also increases future employment opportunities.

Players should also actively seek help from those around them and not try to deal with the emotions on their own. Sharing thoughts and feelings with someone else can be a positive way to relieve some of the negative emotions built up through a major life event, such as sporting retirement. Some players may have support in place through their club and/or England (e.g. a lifestyle advisor, designated safeguarding officer/club welfare officer), who is there to help facilitate this transition and try to make it as smooth as possible. Other players may need to reach elsewhere for support through this process. There are a number of organisations that have been specifically designed to support athletes exiting from their sport, for example, The Transition Phase and Crossing the Line. Player should, however, do appropriate research before choosing to use one of these organisations.

4.6 SUPPORT AVAILABLE

4.6.1 FAMILY AND PEER SUPPORT



Family continues to act as a major part of the support system for players aged 18+. Within this phase, from age 18 through to retirement, a key aspect of players support systems may include parents and partners.

Peers also play a crucial role in support for players age 18+. As players' footballing commitments increase, i.e. becoming semi-professional or professional, the time these players spend alongside their teammates increases. Players can spend the majority of a typical week alongside their teammates, with support from player-to-player being a key component of the support these individuals will receive.

4.6.2 UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

The players that are enrolled at a university may receive a range of different support services, including:

SPORT SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT:

- This support can include strength and conditioning (S&C), physio, lifestyle, nutrition, psychology, performance analysis, medical testing/screening, financial bursaries, and financial packages.
- Please see the [HE Sport Scholarship and Academic Flexibility document](#) for information based on specific universities.

ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY:

- This support can include lectures on an online system, one-to-one tutor support, flexible deadlines, ability to defer exams, timetable planning, and changing methods of assessment from group presentations to written tasks.

- Some universities also offer athletes the opportunity to extend a degree (i.e. completing a degree part time over a number of years). The length of time a degree can be extended depends on the university, but can be up to six years.
- Please see the Sport Scholarship document for an overview of the academic flexibility available for a number of universities.

“ My uni is really supportive and my personal tutor is great. I’m on a sports scholarship so I have someone I can go to if I ever need anything, such as an extension. I do get a lot of support from my uni. ”

**BARCLAYS FA WSL PLAYER
STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY**

4.6.3 EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Players who balance football with part or full-time employment, may receive some support from their employer. This may include flexible hours to allow players to travel to training or matches. It is important to note that there is no guarantee that an employer will be supportive of footballing commitments. If required, players should reach out to their employer to investigate whether any flexibility options can be put in place.

4.6.4 CLUB SUPPORT

Within the club environment, the support that players receive for their dual career may differ between clubs within different leagues, as well as differing within clubs in the same league.

Players may have access to the following support:

- Flexibility around missing the occasional training session if players need to work, study, or if they have other important commitments.

- Club investment in education and a player's personal development. An increasing number of club staff are very supportive of a player's education or vocational work, reinforcing the value of both areas of a player's development.
- Additional advice and support, such as: welfare support, medical provisions.
- Access to guidance through the retirement process. This may include the opportunity to become involved within a different role within the club, i.e. coaching, club ambassador, or other administrative club roles.

For players who have made the transition into a new club environment, it is important to take note of the support structures embedded in the club as early as possible.

This will help players to pin-point the necessary support mechanisms if required. This is particularly important for players who may move from one league to another, i.e. Barclays FA WSL Academy to the FA Women's Championship. The support available may differ between league, as well as the mechanisms through which a player can access support.

4.6.5 ENGLAND SUPPORT

The FA places emphasis on supporting players in their dual career.

The following support may be in place for players who are a part of England Teams and for former Senior Team players who transition out of football:

- Access to The FA Player Education Team who support players in full-time education with their studies whilst with England. This may include provision of compensatory education and the arrangement of university exams whilst on camp or at tournaments.
- Senior international player access to commercial and marketing opportunities that may provide players with a baseline from which they can develop a post-football career (i.e. within the media).

4.6.6 TASS SUPPORT

The Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) is an athlete support programme for talented athletes in education. Each year, the TASS scheme supports hundreds of athletes from over 30 different sports across a network of TASS Delivery Sites (TDSs) across England.



15 of the 23 Lionesses who represented England at the World Cup in 2019 received TASS support earlier in their careers.

TASS support women's football players through three different programmes:

4.6.6.1 TASS Award:

- Limited spaces are allocated annually to select priority England Women's Pathway players that are on a national team Long List at the beginning of the academic calendar. Internal FA Talent Management processes drive how the FA decides which players access the scheme and directs the type of support they will receive. Players and clubs are informed of individual TASS Award nominations as part of the FA IDP process. This programme runs annually from September to August.
- Players on a TASS Award can have access to the following support:
 - Strength and conditioning
 - Physiotherapy
 - Lifestyle
 - Nutrition
 - Sport psychology
 - Medical scheme – A scheme that entitles players to claim for private treatment resulting from a sporting

injury. Players also have access to over the phone counselling for their mental health and wellbeing.

- Care First mental health support - Players have access to a dedicated 24-hour confidential helpline.
- £500 award

“Obviously with TASS they give you a leader, there is someone to talk to about how you are doing in different areas of life basically and he will put you in contact with people who can help you. So I saw the nutritionist recently who was helpful for trying to improve my diet and there are lots of physios and medics that you can go to if you need it.”

TASS AWARD PLAYER

4.6.6.2 TASS-Funded Place:

- The FA fund a second layer of individual TASS places that can support and / or top up performance services received by players at clubs outside of the Barclays FA WSL Academies. Offered annually to select England Women's Pathway players that are on a national team Long List at the beginning of the academic calendar. Internal FA Talent Management processes drive how the FA decides which players access the scheme. Players and clubs are informed of individual TASS Funded nominations as part of the IDP process.
- This programme runs annually from September to August.
- Players on a TASS-Funded Place can have access to the following support:
 - Strength and conditioning (one session a week)
 - Physiotherapy (up to four sessions if required)
 - Medical scheme and Care First mental health support

4.6.6.3 The Barclays FA WSL Academy Programme:

- TASS delivers support services for the Barclays FA WSL Academies, with each Barclays FA WSL Academy having the opportunity to partner with a TASS Delivery Site.
- This programme runs annually from August to April.
- Every Barclays FA WSL Academy is given the opportunity to receive the following three core support services:
 - Strength and conditioning
 - Physiotherapy
 - Lifestyle support
- Each Barclays FA WSL Academy and their TASS Delivery Site work together to develop a unique programme of support that suits the needs of the environment. This may include the availability of additional services such as nutrition and sport psychology.
- All WSL Academy players have the opportunity to receive mental health support through Care First. This service includes access to a dedicated 24-hour confidential helpline.
- It is important to note that Barclays FA WSL Academies have the opportunity to opt-out of this support, so it may be a possibility that not all Barclays FA WSL Academies will integrate TASS support into their club environment.

For more information on the details of each support service, visit the [TASS website](#).



4.6.7 PFA SUPPORT

As mentioned previously, players within Barclays FA WSL clubs, as well as Senior England team members, can access numerous support services through the PFA.

Some of the support services available to players that can help facilitate their dual career development are as follows:

Support from the PFA's Coaching Department in relation to licensed coaching courses:

- The PFA Coaching Department deliver regionally based Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football and FA UEFA B Courses. All PFA courses are delivered by coaches who have players or worked within professional football and who understand the game.

Financial assistance towards educational and vocational courses through the PFA's Education Department:

- The aim of the PFA Education Department is to help PFA members retrain towards a career after football. The PFA provide

information, advice and grants to current and former players (registered as full members) towards most courses leading to a recognised qualification.

- For university courses, players can receive a bursary of £1,250 annually on completion of each year. Player can also receive up to a maximum of £1500 a year towards other nationally recognised/accredited courses.

Access to mental health counselling network:

- The PFA work with Sporting Chance Clinic, supporting and funding a safe, dedicated environment, where players can receive support and counselling.
- The union also has a 24/7 helpline that is available 365 days of the year if players need someone to talk to as well as a nation-wide network of 40 counsellors for current and former players to access. All contact will remain private and completely confidential.

4.6.8 SUPPORT FROM AN INTERMEDIARY



- For players who work alongside an intermediary, this may add another member to their support system. Intermediaries typically provide players with support in negotiating club contracts and securing sponsorship deals. Players who have built strong relationships with their intermediary may continue to receive support through the retirement process and into life after football.

5

OVERVIEW



5. OVERVIEW

This document provides an overview of the dual career options and opportunities that are available for women's footballers in England. It also provides an outline of some challenges players may face, as well as the support players may have access to. The document should be used by players and parents as a guide, however, for more individualised advice and guidance, players should consult the stakeholders they work directly with (i.e. teachers/university staff, club staff, and England staff).

The document is split into three phases (under-14-16, 16-18, and 18+). Players can, therefore, refer to the section that is most relevant to their age group. The 'decisions and options to consider' section within each phase looks ahead at players opportunities as they move forward within their dual career. If used correctly, this document should provide players with the confidence to overcome challenges, reach out for support, and ask the right questions when considering their dual career options moving forwards.

EXAMPLE DUAL CAREER PATHWAYS OF FEMALE FOOTBALLERS



On the next pages are five examples of dual career pathways that notable female players have taken. The examples are there to demonstrate that each pathway is different for every player. Taking a certain route may be the right thing for one player and wrong for another. Be mindful that there is no 'ideal' path and players manage their dual careers in different ways.



AIMEE PALMER

England Women's Under-20 Player

AGE GROUP		UNDER-14	UNDER-15	UNDER-16	UNDER-17	UNDER-18	UNDER-19	UNDER-20
AGE		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
FOOTBALL	Club Football	Norwich City Centre of Excellence						
				Norwich ACC and Wymondham Town United Boys				
					Bristol City Development Squad			
						Bristol City First Team		
							Manchester United First Team	Sheffield United First Team (On Loan from Manchester United)
	College Football				SGS College Football			
International Football			England Age groups					
EDUCATION	School Level	School Years 8-9						
			GCSEs					
	Further Education				A-Levels (Biology, Chemistry, Psychology)			
	Higher Education						University of Salford (Part-Time Sports Science Degree)	



EBONY SALMON

England Women's Under-20 Player

AGE GROUP		UNDER-14	UNDER-15	UNDER-16	UNDER-17	UNDER-18	UNDER-19	UNDER-20
AGE		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
FOOTBALL	Club Football	Local Boys Team Gornal Colts	Aston Villa Centre of Excellence					
					Aston Villa First Team			
						Manchester United (On Loan to Sheffield United)		
							Bristol City First Team	
	International Football			England Age groups				
EDUCATION	School Level	School Years 8-9	GCSEs					
	Further Education				College A-Levels (Sport, Sociology, Law)			
						Tutor - A-Level (Law) College - BTEC (Sport)		
	Break from Education						Year Break from Education	
	Higher Education							Open University Part-Time Course Criminology and Law



KAREN CARNEY

England Women's Senior Player

AGE GROUP		UNDER-14	UNDER-15	UNDER-16	UNDER-17	UNDER-18	UNDER-19	UNDER-20	UNDER-21	SENIOR																	
AGE		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21+																	
YEAR		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015-2019	2020									
FOOTBALL	Club Football	Birmingham City (Youth)																	Retirement								
		Birmingham City (First Team)						Arsenal			Chicago Red Stars (US)			Birmingham City			Chelsea										
	International Football	England Age groups																									
						England Senior Lioness																					
FOOTBALL	School Level	School Years 8 - 9																									
		GCSEs																									
	Further Education				A-Levels																						
	Higher Education/Work						Loughborough University (Sport Psychology)									Online Course		Masters Degree		Internship at West Brom (psychology)		Trained in Trauma		Supported the Chelsea Youth Programme in Psychology		Work with England Youth Teams Punditry	



LEANDRA LITTLE

FA Women's Championship Player

AGE GROUP		UNDER-11	UNDER-12	UNDER-13	UNDER-14	UNDER-15	UNDER-16	UNDER-17	UNDER-18	UNDER-19	UNDER-20	UNDER-21	SENIOR				
AGE		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21+				
YEAR		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008–2011	2012–2017	2018	2019	2020
FOOTBALL	Club Football and Basketball	Grassroots Football and Basketball (Torbay Ladies/Plymouth Racers)						City of Sheffield Hatters Basketball (Division 1 and 2)									
													Lincoln Ladies Football (Northern Prem/WSL)				
														Doncaster Rovers Belles Football (WSL 1 and 2)			
	International Basketball															Liverpool Women (WSL)	Sheffield United Women (Championship)
						England Junior/U20 Women											
									England Senior Women								
FOOTBALL	School Level	School Years 8 - 9															
	Further Education			GCSEs													
						A-Levels											
	Higher Education/Work							Sheffield Hallam University (BSc Sport Development and Coaching)									
											PGCE Physical Education with QTS						
												PE Teacher					
															FA Education & Welfare Officer and Liverpool Women's Education Lead		



NIAMH CHARLES

England Women's Under-20 Player

AGE GROUP		UNDER-14	UNDER-15	UNDER-16	UNDER-17	UNDER-18	UNDER-19	UNDER-20	UNDER-21
AGE		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
FOOTBALL	Club Football	Grassroots							
			Liverpool Academy						
					Liverpool First Team				
	International Football			England Age groups					
EDUCATION	School Level	School Years 8-9							
			GCSEs						
	Further Education				A-Levels (Biology, Chemistry, Psychology)				
	Higher Education						Liverpool John Moors University (Sport and Exercise Science)		



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