



GAME CHANGER

The FA plan for women's football in England: 2013-18



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The story so far...

The five-year plan set out in this document is based on some firm foundations, as The FA's 2008-12 strategy cycle draws to a close.

Here are some of the highlights of the last four years for the women's game:

- The England women's senior team reached the final of the UEFA European Championship in 2009 and the quarter finals of the FIFA World Cup in 2007 and 2011;
- England players were established on FA centralised contracts;
- Under the auspices of The FA, a Great Britain women's team participated for the first time and reached the quarter finals of the Olympic football tournament at London 2012;
- The total attendance across the 26 women's Olympic football games was 660,986 around the UK. 80,203 spectators watched USA beat Japan in the final – the second biggest attendance for a women's game in history – while 70,584 watched Great Britain beat Brazil in an unforgettable performance;
- TV viewing figures also provided proof that the Olympic platform introduced women's football to a whole new audience. A peak audience of 3.9 million watched Great Britain's 1-0 victory over Brazil with an average of 2.3 million viewers;
- In March 2011, The FA successfully launched The FA WSL, a new women's semi-professional national football league. It started with eight teams, two sponsors and a broadcast partner;
- In 2009, the England Women U19s won their UEFA European age group tournament;
- The FA successfully bid to host the UEFA Women's Under 17 tournament to be held in 2014;
- Sport England's 'Active People' statistics confirmed women's football as the biggest team sport for women in England – and the fourth-largest team sport overall. 253,600 women play football every month;
- Female participation saw registered girls' youth teams increase from 4,500 to 5,143, and adult teams from 1,179 to 1,437;

- In 2012 The FA established a girls' football festival roadshow in partnership with UEFA and Continental. This resulted in 22 FA Conti Girls' Football Festivals in 2012. Over 6,500 girls attended and the programme increased regional media coverage and awareness of the game;
- 114 pan-disability female teams were established;
- The number of female coaches almost doubled. There are now more than 25,000 qualified women coaches, 200 of whom have achieved Level 3 qualification and 17 reaching Level 4;
- There are currently 1,035 qualified female referees – an increase from 636 in 2008;
- The FA Tesco Skills programme which started in 2007 aimed at 5-11-year-olds has had 3.8 million participants – 42% are female;
- A full review of the Talent Development Plan was undertaken and 31 Girls' Centres of Excellence and 29 Girls' Player Development Centres were established to support the most talented junior players;
- A widespread mixed-football review took place and mixed football is now available for children up to the Under-14 age group. It was previously available up to U-11.



Women's football is the area with the most potential for growth in the nation's favourite game. We are determined to lead that development at every level and have created a robust plan for doing so using all our resources and knowledge."

David Bernstein
Chairman, The Football Association



The next five years start now

Over the next five years, The FA has stated a fourfold commitment to women's football in England.

The FA will:

- Increase the number of women's and girls' teams from the 6,600 already in the game
- Support talented girls in the grassroots game through our Player Development Centres and Centres of Excellence
- Develop our best players by introducing an Elite Performance Unit and funding central contracts for England senior players
- Use The FA WSL to gain greater exposure for the women's game and financially sustain semi-professional women's football in this country.

Crucially, women's football is a key component in The FA's overarching strategy for the whole of football in this country. This strategy aims to:

- Build winning teams
- Ensure football is for everyone
- Govern the game effectively

The time is right

There has never been a better platform on which to build women's football in England.

Why?

The London 2012 Olympic Games demonstrated the quality of women's football in spectacular fashion. The FA is committed to harnessing the unprecedented interest in the game and setting out a clear plan for taking the domestic game to the next level. At the same time, The FA will ensure the national teams remain competitive on a strengthening international stage.

The commitment is timely because on 8 July 2013 The FA will celebrate 20 years of running women's football – and on 26 October 2013, 150 years of running the men's game. A strong women's game is a cornerstone of the next phase of The FA's development.

The FA's last 4 year plan is coming to an end and The FA Board has approved key new commitments. This document outlines how The FA will move the game forward over the next five years to consolidate women's football status as the number one female team sport.

How?

This five year plan frames how The FA will lead the women's game on and off the pitch at every level.

Fulfilling its existing leadership role, The FA will work with partners across sport to deliver a strong women's football infrastructure.

The FA will invest a further £3.5 million into women's football in England over the next four years (2014-18) to deliver the Elite Performance Unit and the expansion of The FA WSL.

In 2013 The FA will announce implementation plans for increasing participation working with Sport England, key football partners and sponsors.



Making it happen

Five elements will combine to deliver The FA's plans for women's football over the next five years:

1. Create an Elite Performance Unit
2. Deliver a new commercial strategy
3. Develop The FA Women's Super League – Phase 2
4. Grow participation
5. Grow the fanbase

The following pages explain The FA's intentions in each of these areas in more detail.

Create an Elite Performance Unit

1

Background

UEFA and FIFA have created successful international tournaments and the international game is developing apace. The FIFA Women's World Cup has just been expanded to 24 teams to acknowledge the growth in standards throughout the world.

The England Women's senior team is ranked eighth in the world and reached the final of the UEFA European Championship in 2009 and quarter finals of the FIFA World Cup in 2007 and 2011. The Great Britain women's team, led by Hope Powell, reached the quarter finals of the Olympics in 2012.

In 2010-11, The FA undertook a comprehensive review of Centres of Excellence and the talent pathway within the women's game. This resulted in:

- 29 new Player Development Centres
- 31 FA Girls' Centres of Excellence
- Three Elite Performance Camps to provide an effective link between emerging talent and international football

The England Women's Deaf Football Team came back from the first World Cup in Greece with a bronze medal in 2008, the squad has now won three medals in the three competitions they have appeared in.

Our Plan

To preserve England's status as a top international side and its continued competition on the global stage, The FA will fund a new Elite Performance Unit (EPU) at St George's Park and create the role of Head of Elite Women's Development.

The EPU will streamline the pathway from youth to senior football.

Recently opened in Burton-upon-Trent, the 330-acre St George's Park, national football centre, is the centralised performance centre for coach education.

The EPU will drive the strategic development of the player and coach pathways to help build winning teams. It will be able to take advantage of the facilities, infrastructure, personnel and services at St George's Park.

The EPU will now hold the remit to develop the best young players. One task will be to produce a vision, philosophy and coaching guide entitled 'The Future Game' for young female player development.

A Head of Elite Women's Development will be responsible for the talent pathway, including producing more and better coaches working in the women's game at all levels. This directly builds on the work to date of The FA's Female Coach Mentoring Scheme.

FA goals to 2018:

- To establish a Women's Elite Performance Unit and appoint a Head of Elite Women's Development;
- To publish a 'Future Game' document for women's football;
- To strive for all squads to qualify for major final tournaments and achieve podium finishes;
- To continue investment in seven women's international teams;
- To create a coaching strategy for the women's game building on the successful FA's Female Coach Mentoring Scheme;
- To increase funding of centralised contracts for the senior England squad;
- To continue to invest in 31 FA Licensed Centres of Excellence providing high-quality coaching, sports science and sports medicine; and a games programme;
- To continue to invest in Player Development Centres providing quality coaching for talented girls in club based football;
- To work in partnership with the English Institute of Sport to deliver sports science, nutrition, strength and conditioning support and lifestyle management services;
- To continue to invest in Elite Performance Camps to support the best player's transition into England.

“The Elite Performance Unit has been created to provide outstanding support to our female elite players and coaches. The Unit will benefit from the fantastic new coaching, sport science and sports medicine facilities at St George's Park.”

Sir Trevor Brooking
The FA's Director of Football Development

“The review of the talent pathway which took place with all our partners (2010-11) has led to a major restructuring throughout England. We feel confident the system is now in place which will result in the most talented girls being identified and supported to be the best they can.”

Rachel Pavlou
FA National Women's Football Development Manager



Deliver a new commercial strategy

2

Background

Women's football is experiencing unprecedented levels of interest from commercial organisations and the media. The FA will harness this interest to raise the game's profile, support its objectives and generate new revenue and partnerships.

Our Plan

For the first time in FA history, there will be a distinct commercial programme for women's football.

The commercial rights for England women, The FA Women's Cup and The FA WSL will be sold separately from the men's game. This will establish a clear identity and maximise impact for the women's game in a crowded sports marketplace. Broadcast coverage will be secured and strong partnerships forged with a deliberately limited and select group of commercial brands interested in working with The FA to elevate women's football for the next commercial cycle 2014-18. Each partner will hold 'sole and exclusive' rights to be associated with a specific area of the women's game.



“This is the right time to be developing commercial plans to bring new partners into women's football. The standards of football are high and the international game is very strong. We have to keep pace with the top female footballing nations both on and off the pitch. We need partners who will work with us to raise our profile and really take the game forward. I'm convinced this is the right time for this plan to be put into place.”

FA Goals to 2018:

- To implement a women's football commercial strategy and deliver commercial investment;
- To sell a package of women's football broadcast rights which offers an unprecedented breadth of coverage;
- To implement a distinct brand strategy for the women's game that inspires players and fans and gives the game a clear identity and vision.

Alex Horne,
FA General Secretary

Develop The FA Women's Super League - Phase 2

3

Background

The FA Women's Super League (FA WSL) was launched in March 2011 as a new semi-professional summer league providing top-quality competition for England's best female footballers.

The FA WSL has lifted domestic playing standards and provided better opportunities for female athletes to play and work in the domestic game. The creation of The FA WSL resulted in a broadcast partnership with ESPN to televise weekly highlights shows and a series of live games. It also brought in new commercial partner, Continental, who have helped promote the game through regional festivals and public relations. The FA WSL has raised awareness of the domestic game, raised standards on and off the pitch via a club licensing model and provided positive female role models.

Our Plan

The FA will continue to invest in and develop the fledgling FA WSL and in 2014 will create a second division.

The FA will create a new women's league and competitions unit to oversee the development of The FA WSL, The FA Women's Cup and the complete women's football league pyramid.

The FA will support the development of a maximum of 20 FA WSL licensed 'beacon' clubs across the two divisions who will work with FA Centres of Excellence to provide pathways for English talent.



“We have looked into the impact of The FA WSL and are delighted to be able to expand a competition format that is driving playing standards and improving awareness of the women's game. We will work closely with the women's leagues throughout the country to implement a clear and consistent system.”

Sue Hough
Chairman, FA Women's Committee



FA Goals to 2018:

- Create a new women's league and competitions unit;
- To make The FA WSL an exciting, competitive and sustainable elite league;
- To introduce a second division (FA WSL2), to enable promotion and relegation;
- Work with The FA WSL clubs and AASE (Advance Apprenticeship in Sport Excellence) to provide programme of additional support for talented players aged 16-19;
- Create a FA WSL Talent/Reserves/Youth League to provide appropriate competition;
- To develop a facility strategy for the FA WSL.

Grow participation

4



Background

Women's football is now the fourth largest team sport in England after men's team sports of football, rugby and cricket and most popular women's team sport with 253,600 women regularly playing each month (Active People research from Sport England). This research also identifies women's football has a latent demand of a 100,000 who want to play football or play more regularly.

The FA now supports 6,600 girls' and women's 11-a-side teams and runs regional programmes to specifically target growth of the game.

The FA is committed to ensuring the retention and growth of the girls' and women's game via the National Game Strategy and investment programmes. These include:

- **The FA Tesco Skills programme:** aimed at 5-11-year-old children, 42% of participation has come from girls (3.8 million participants since 2007).
- **The FA/Mars 'Just Play' initiative:** aimed at anyone aged 16 and above, it currently engages 13% women (14,000 of 108,500 attendances since it started in summer 2011).
- **The FA/Vauxhall 'Football Mash Up' programme:** aimed at 14-17 year-olds who are considering dropping out of football, a 10-week pilot scheme has just been completed. This will become another focus for girls' and women's participation.
- A comprehensive schools, colleges and universities development programme with strong club links.

It is crucial to get the support structure right and there are now double the number of female coaches throughout football from four years ago to 25,000 and over 1,000 female referees.

Our Plan

The development of girls' and women's football is an integral part of the £43 million FA National Game Strategy.

In 2013 The FA will announce implementation plans for increasing participation working with Sport England, and key football partners and sponsors. The FA Children and Young People Strategy will form a vital part of bringing girls into the game.

The FA national programmes will target more female participation and address the issues that make women want to take up sport as identified in FA research and that of the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF).

The FA will also work to transition youth players into adult players, officials, volunteers and coaches. This will be rolled out in partnership with Sport England via FA partners in professional clubs, County FAs, schools, as well as further and higher education bodies.

FA Goals to 2018:

- To remain the no.1 female team sport in England and become the second-largest team sport after men's football based on Sport England figures by 2018;
- To develop and implement 50 County FA plans for the growth and development of women and girls' football providing a clear pathway in every County FA from schools coaching and competitions, FA Tesco's Skills Centres, club links, club and league development and coach, referee and volunteer development;
- To work in partnership with Sport England, the County FAs, Premier League and Football League Trust to combat drop-out at 14 year-old age group, by providing a range of football opportunities;
- To establish targets for female player, coach and referee participation including black and minority ethnic communities and those with disabilities;
- To continue the successful roadshows using the stars of The FA WSL and England to encourage girls and women to play the game and promote the benefits of physical activity, fun, teamwork and friendships;
- To continue to raise club standards throughout the game including facilities provision.

“There has been a huge amount of work done throughout the country by The FA and our partners to take the game to its current level. Our new commitment to women's football moves the development on. The new investment has been carefully targeted to improve our domestic and international status and really drive the game forward.”

Kelly Simmons
FA Head of the National Game

Grow the fanbase

5

Background

The FA WSL has seen a consistent average attendance of 550 per match over the past two seasons, generating an initial fanbase which didn't previously exist in the women's domestic game. England home attendances have averaged 5,000 and the London 2012 Olympic Games shattered English women's football attendance and viewing records.

According to research conducted for the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, this summer's Games has already had a positive impact on women's sport. Their post-Olympic survey with IPSOS Mori has shown that attitudes are changing:

- 75% of adults want to see increased media coverage of women's sport as part of the Games' legacy;
- 81% think our sportswomen are better role models than other celebrities.

Our Plan

The FA will grow a women's football fanbase for England teams and FA WSL via communications delivered through our own media, broadcast and commercial partners. We will create a clear calendar of women's football events to showcase the sport and we will promote our elite female athletes as role models.

The FA will ensure the 150th year of celebrations will highlight women's football as a real cornerstone of its legacy and a key part of The FA's future plans for football in England.



FA Goals to 2018:

- To conduct research into women's football fans to establish the audience;
- To continue to employ female athletes as ambassadors to inspire and communicate the game to fans and media;
- To consistently use all FA content and media to communicate directly with women's football fans and continue to use innovative digital media programmes to engage fans directly;
- To implement a new FA women's football communication strategy to grow media coverage and build the fanbase;
- To generate a rolling calendar of key women's football competitions and events in 2013 and beyond, including celebrating 20 years of women's football.

“The fans at the Olympics were incredible from the support in the stadia, around the country and in the post-Games parade. The players were really overwhelmed at times by the level of support shown by the fans who attended. We now have to harness that enthusiasm and ensure we attract fans to England and FA WSL”

Casey Stoney
England Women's Captain



Women's football in England – a brief history

After the game's initial popularity at the end of the 19th century The Football Association came to the conclusion that football was 'unsuitable for women' and in 1921 banned it from being played on League grounds.

Four decades on and in 1966, the World Cup in England led to a resurgence of interest in the women's game. Three years on and in 1969 the Women's Football Association (WFA) was formed to re-establish the game. It was an independent body and not part of The FA.

The WFA made real strides in the fledgling international competitions and even took an England side to the finals of the European Championship in 1984. However, they were unable to develop the game at grassroots level due to limited funding.

The FA's direct involvement began in 1993. Since that time, the game has progressed and developed throughout the country and the England women's senior team has been able to participate on the highest stage. In 1993 there were only 80 girls' teams, no professional players, no football development plan and little funding.

In the past 20 years, leagues and competitions have been formed throughout the country to form a thriving pyramid of women's football. It is now the top female team participation sport in England.

There remains considerable work to be undertaken, but The FA is committed to making women's football a credible and financially more sustainable sport in its own right. This means strong domestic competitions, a substantial grassroots game and a successful England team.

To find out more

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“England has been consistently ranked in the top 10 in the world for the past decade. To keep that position and improve on it we need to keep developing at all levels of the game. This wide-ranging and ambitious plan will provide the structure to do that throughout the country and with St George's Park as our home the women's game has an exciting future.”

Hope Powell,
England Women National Coach





SCOTT

8

BROWN

1

YANKEY

11

HOUGHTON

6

RAFFERTY

2

WHITE

9