

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL COMPETITIONS



THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Fact Sheet



F.A. Cup, Premier League and League Cup; yes, the women's game has got them all. Not only that but with 55,000 players and 2,548 teams there are many competitions run on a regional basis. It is, however, the major national competitions to which aspiring players will hope to one day win.

THE F.A. WOMEN'S CHALLENGE CUP

The first ever national women's cup competition began in the 1970/1971 season and was called the Women's Football Association Mitre Challenge Trophy. There were 71 entrants including teams from Scotland and Wales. Southampton WFC beat the Scottish side Stewarton and Thistle 4-1 in the final played at London's Crystal Palace sports arena on 9 May 1971.

Southampton WFC are the most successful team in the competition winning the title eight times in the 70's and 80's. The Doncaster Belles have competed in the Final a record 12 times, winning six, but Arsenal have been the most successful recently winning four of the last seven.



The F.A. Competitions Department have run the cup since the 1993/1994 season when it was renamed the F.A. Women's Challenge Cup. AXA are the current sponsors with a deal that runs from 1998 to 2002.

The 2000/2001 Final was won by Arsenal who beat the only professional side in England, Fulham, 1-0 at Crystal Palace's Selhurst Park Stadium. Over 14,000 attended the game which was shown live on BSkyB with full match commentary on BBC Radio 5. The competition today boasts over 200 entrants.

WINNERS

1971	Southampton
1972	Southampton
1973	Southampton
1974	Fodens
1975	Southampton
1976	Southampton
1977	QPR
1978	Southampton
1979	Southampton
1980	St Helens
1981	Southampton
1982	Lowestoft
1983	Doncaster Belles
1984	Howbury Grange
1985	Friends of Fulham
1986	Norwich
1987	Doncaster Belles
1988	Doncaster Belles
1989	Leasowe Pacific
1990	Doncaster Belles
1991	Millwall Lionesses
1992	Doncaster Belles
1993	Arsenal
1994	Doncaster Belles
1995	Arsenal
1996	Croydon
1997	Millwall
1998	Arsenal
1999	Arsenal
2000	Croydon
2001	Arsenal



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THE AXA F.A. WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE

Women's football runs on a pyramid structure of leagues with 741 women's clubs taking part in national and regional competitions. The pinnacle of the pyramid is the F.A. Women's Premier League. Thirty-four teams compete in three divisions; National (the top ten teams) and Northern and Southern (12 teams in each of equal level). The National Division receives the most attention with competition fierce between famous women's clubs like Doncaster Belles, Arsenal, Charlton (previously Croydon) and Everton - all of whom have held the title in recent years.

The league received its first sponsorship in 1998 when AXA became the title holders in a deal that runs until 2002.

The league began under the auspices of the Women's Football Association (W.F.A.) in 1991 with 24 clubs. Today as well as the league The F.A. run an F.A. Women's Premier Reserve League competition.

Current holders are Arsenal who won the league and cup treble.

THE AXA F.A. WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE CUP

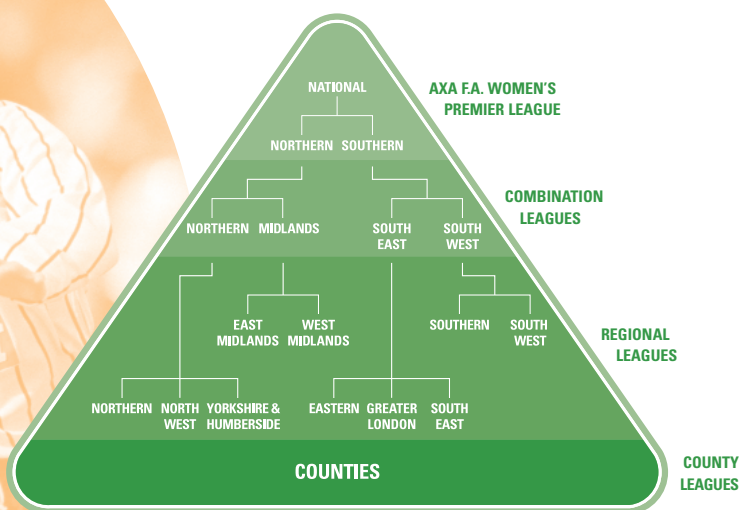
The League Cup has been running for 9 seasons and is only available to members of the F.A. Women's Premier League. Arsenal have been the dominant team in this competition winning an impressive 6 times. The 2000/2001 season saw Arsenal yet again lift the trophy after beating Tranmere Rovers at Chester City.

UEFA EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CLUB COMPETITION

The 2001/2002 season sees the start of the 1st ever European club competition for women. Arsenal, as league winners, are England's representatives. Thirty-two teams have entered the competition and Arsenal have received funds from The F.A. to help them participate.

THE WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE

In March 2000 The F.A. announced their plans to establish a women's professional league in three years. This ambitious project is still on target with research completed and the marketing and business models due to be finalised by the end 2002. Fulham are the only pro team in England currently but many clubs are actively planning to be part of the first professional league in Europe.



WOMEN'S PYRAMID OF FOOTBALL

THE F.A. WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE WINNERS

1993	Arsenal
1994	Doncaster Belles
1995	Arsenal
1996	Croydon
1997	Arsenal
1998	Everton
1999	Croydon
2000	Croydon
2001	Arsenal

A commitment to have a professional women's league by 2003 has been made by The F.A., as part of their vision to use the power of football to build a better future.

THE F.A. WOMEN'S LEAGUE CUP WINNERS

1993	Arsenal (W.F.A. Competition)
1994	Arsenal
1995	Wimbledon (No National Division sides)
1996	Wembley (No National Division sides)
1997	Millwall Lionesses
1998	Arsenal
1999	Arsenal
2000	Arsenal
2001	Arsenal

