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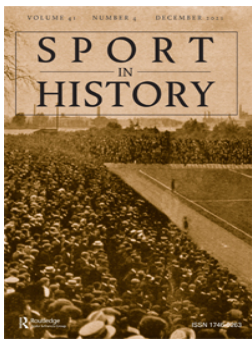
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# 'The game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged': a comparative analysis of the 1921 English Football Association ban on women's football in Britain and Ireland

Fiona Skillen <sup>a</sup>, Helena Byrne <sup>b</sup>, John Carrier<sup>b</sup> and Gary James<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK; <sup>b</sup>Independent Researcher;

<sup>c</sup>Honorary Research Fellow, International Centre for Sports History and Culture, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

## ABSTRACT

On 5 December 1921, the English Football Association (FA) implemented a ban on affiliated clubs allowing women's teams to use their grounds and the use of FA registered referees, thus undermining and restricting the women's game. The FA claimed that football was unsuitable for women and that it should not be encouraged. 2021 also marks 50 years since UEFA directed its members to recognise women's football. The FA ban has been well documented; however, the English experience of the ban implemented by the FA has been conflated with the experience of the rest of Britain and Ireland. This article examines the impact, the FA ban had on women's football in these regions. It explores if a similar ban was introduced by the four other British and Irish governing bodies (Scottish Football Association, Welsh Football Association, Irish Football Association and the Football Association of Ireland formerly the Football Association of the Irish Free State) and what impact this had on women's football there.

## Introduction

5 December 2021 marked the centenary of the English Football Association's (FA) ban of women's football. In recent years there has been a growth in the study of the history of women's football across Britain and Ireland and this anniversary seemed like a good opportunity to reflect on the similarities and differences between the paths of women's football in these nations. The English experience of the ban implemented by the FA has been well-documented and has often been conflated with the experience of the rest of Britain and Ireland, yet this newly emerging research indicates that the developments of the women's game and specifically the impact of the ban was

**CONTACT** Fiona Skillen  fiona.skillen@gcu.ac.uk

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complex and varied across these countries. This article will also examine what long-term impact, if any, the FA ban had on the progress of women's football in each nation. We examine each country in turn, exploring similar themes in each section in order that comparisons can be drawn.

## Literature review

One of the greatest challenges for those researching the history of women's sport is the paucity of source material, it has been historically neglected in the archives and therefore is reliant on oral history and fragmentary media coverage to piece together its complex history, for this reason early histories were often and necessarily incomplete.<sup>1</sup> However, the recent digitisation of national and local newspapers from across Britain and Ireland has allowed researchers to explore the history of the women's game in much more depth than has been possible before. Even with this development, there are still enormous gaps with many cities and regions underrepresented in digital collections. For example, Manchester, a leading footballing city with at least two prominent women's clubs by the end of the 1940s, had two significant footballing newspapers in existence at that time in addition to multiple nightly newspapers. Only one of these has been digitised for that period and it is the one which tended not to cover football in detail.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore still important to seek out and research physical newspaper copies in the traditional manner. Without a regular schedule of activity, this process is both time consuming and potentially fruitless. Undoubtedly, much regional women's football will still be waiting to be rediscovered, but digitisation allows us to at least begin the process of recovering regional and national narratives.

Early academic researchers of women's football did not have access to the variety of material now available and they deserve credit for piecing together an early historiography for the sport, particularly in England.<sup>3</sup> The situation in England is by far the most developed area of academic research across Britain and Ireland. It has developed significantly in recent years with multiple areas analysed including professionalism, player experiences and club histories.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly this research has been conducted, not only by academics interested in the game but often by those with direct personal connections to it. For example, there has been a pathway whereby former footballers, such as Themen and Culvin, who have pursued academic careers with research inspired by their experiences as players.<sup>5</sup> Bolton has been inspired to perform in-depth research as a result of a family connection, while James, whose wife played, is attempting to document the history of women and football in Manchester as he has previously on men's football in the region.<sup>6</sup>

Academic studies of the women's game in Scotland have focused almost exclusively on the contemporary game, exceptions to this are the work of

MacBeth and McCuaig and more recently Macmillan, Fraser, and Skillen.<sup>7</sup> The earliest studies, those of MacBeth and McCuaig, provided the first academic critiques of the game and its development for women in Scotland, but given the limited source material available at that time and the breadth of their studies they are only able to provide an initial overview of the game in its first 100 years. Recent studies, such as those by Fraser, have added greatly to our understanding of the game from the mid-twentieth century by drawing on oral histories of those who played and organised the game.<sup>8</sup> The findings of these interviews, alongside the archival material donated to the Scottish National Football Museum during the course of the study, have provided a depth of understanding of the lived experience of players and organisers and an insight into the game in a way that has not and will not be possible for the early period. There has remained a substantial gap in our understanding of the women's game in Scotland between 1900 and 1960. Studies currently underway hope to remedy this issue and are drawn on in this paper.

In Ireland, the last review of historical publications related to women's soccer was published in 2019 by Byrne.<sup>9</sup> This publication was only the fourth academic article to cover the history of women's soccer there. However, with the recent publication of the special issue of the open-access journal, *Studies in Arts and Humanities* which focused on women in sport in Ireland, two further historical articles have now been published.<sup>10</sup> These are the first that focuses solely on Northern Ireland as previous articles focused on the Republic of Ireland.<sup>11</sup> The vast majority of the current historical research on women's football in Ireland has been conducted by independent researchers who have been instrumental in uncovering the footballing history of the island. Conferences organised by International Football History Conference, the Football Collective and the County Museum Dundalk as well as the website Playing Pasts have played an important role in showcasing the work carried out by these researchers. The crowd sourcing project *Mapping Irish Football* is also another valuable resource that has originated from independent researchers of both men's and women's football in Ireland. The crowd sourcing project Mapping Irish Football is also another valuable resource that has originated from independent researchers of both men's and women's football in Ireland. This project collected citations of any references to Irish women across all codes of football. This which included players, administrators or even female attendance at men's football. The final dataset was deposited with the British Library News Team in December 2021. It is available to download from the British Library Research Repository under a Creative Commons BY 4.0 Attribution licence. It is hoped that this dataset will encourage further academic research on this sport as it highlights the rich footballing history in Ireland and it can no longer be ignored.<sup>12,13</sup>

There is currently no published work on the history or evolution of women's football in Wales. Ceri Stennett who was the Football Association Wales historian, among other duties he performed, embarked on collating the history in 2007. Further research has been conducted by Carrier who will be publishing his findings in the near future. Much of the research conducted is via media archives and interviews with former officials and players who were involved dating back to 1921 including those who had relatives playing for teams. Oral histories have been a vital aspect of this research as many media reports were inaccurate and a significant proportion of the archives are not yet digitised. The work of researchers in other nations has also proved to be hugely important in mapping the development within Wales, mentions of games, players and tours in local and national papers across Britain and Ireland have helped to substantiate Welsh records and recollections.<sup>13</sup>

## England

### *Women's football in England by 1921*

Formal attempts to organise games between teams of women came in the nineteenth century, most notably in the early 1880s and in 1895, and the earliest of these predated the establishment of the 'male' Football League.<sup>14</sup> However, these initiatives could not be sustained and while there were girls and young women participating in street football, the opportunities for them to play at a competitive level did not exist until the development of factory, munition, and community teams during World War One (WW1).<sup>15</sup> The nature and structure of women's competition during the war varied across England, although there is evidence that some cities, such as Manchester, established their own league competitions for clubs across their conurbation.<sup>16</sup>

In the aftermath of World War One the game continued to grow with an estimated 150 women's teams in England by 1921.<sup>17</sup> In addition, show piece games, most notably featuring Dick, Kerr Ladies, attracted significant crowds.<sup>18</sup> Much has been made of a Goodison Park attendance of 53,000, with thousands locked outside, but there were other prominent attendances with, for example, a game at Manchester United's Old Trafford attracting 31,000 in January 1921 and another at Bolton's Burnden Park attended by 27,218.<sup>19</sup> While these were one-off games it should be noted that the average attendances of men's teams United and Bolton were 27,140 and 22,910 respectively in 1920, hence these were prominent local events. The size of support for women's games was frequently discussed in contemporary newspapers, ensuring the wider population was aware of the game's growth,

while negative voices were aired by those who felt the sport was not appropriate for women.<sup>20</sup>

### ***England and the 1921 English Football Association ban***

From 5 December 1921 women's football was banned from FA affiliated grounds with the reasons outlined being that the game could be harmful to female participants and that there were questions over where the funds from charity games were actually going.<sup>21</sup> These were weak arguments as the medical view could easily be challenged and the potential for fraud could have been reduced had the FA or Government chosen to regulate the sport. In any case, the potential for similar fraudulent activity occurred within men's football, suggesting that the FA wanted to dissuade – or end – female participation rather than possessing concern for player exploitation.

The FA ban was not an outright ban on female participation in football instead it prevented FA affiliated clubs from staging women's football on their pitches. This meant that games could still occur at other venues, such as rugby grounds, athletics venues, and parks, but it took away the possibility of playing and developing the game in prominent venues in major footballing centres and forbade its members from acting as match officials. In effect, while women were not prohibited from playing the sport, its growth was curtailed and its popularity suffered. The sport's development was hindered.<sup>22</sup>

### ***What happened to women's football in England immediately after the ban?***

The ban significantly reduced the opportunity for women to participate in the sport and for those working with FA affiliated clubs promoting the sport could result in punishment, such as when the former Stoke City footballer Jimmy Broad trained a Chelmsford women's team in 1950.<sup>23</sup> In addition, subsequent generations were prevented from watching female role models while the entire football industry, from media coverage to kit manufacturing, paid little or no attention to female participation. While the ban was in place men's football grew and improved significantly in almost every area, including participation, attendances, income, kit development, and so on, with England finding success, winning the World Cup in 1966, and with English clubs participating in European competitions. Women's football was prevented from developing in this manner, despite its growing popularity at the time the ban was implemented.

Some women's clubs did continue, most famously Dick, Kerr Ladies, but confinement to non-FA affiliated grounds limited potential. An English Ladies' Football Association (ELFA) was established in the immediate

aftermath of the ban with predictions of a membership of ‘fifty- or sixty-women’s clubs’ and a competition consisting of five divisions.<sup>24</sup> The organisation staged its own FA Cup featuring 23 clubs, which Stoke Ladies won, but the refusal of the most popular club of the era, Dick, Kerr Ladies, to get involved may have limited the competition’s long-term appeal.<sup>25</sup>

The ELFA was dissolved in 1931 though it had been effectively dead for some time.<sup>26</sup> Women’s football did of course continue but games were primarily played for charitable reasons or at local fetes and fairs. This situation continued into the 1940s with new teams emerging such as, most notably, Manchester Ladies (established 1947) and Manchester Corinthians (established 1949). These teams were not connected but, like Dick, Kerr Ladies, they helped to popularise the game, playing high profile games.<sup>27</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, the Corinthians won tournaments in South America, France, and Germany and the club continued into the 1980s.<sup>28</sup>

The growth of women’s football in the 1960s saw a significant increase in the number of teams and, also in competition. Formal leagues and tournaments were established, including the Deal International Tournament from 1967 which directly led to the creation of the Women’s FA (WFA).<sup>29</sup> In 1969, 44 clubs attended the inaugural meeting of the WFA and from the beginning pressure was exerted on the FA to rescind its ban.<sup>30</sup> Officially the FA lifted the ban in 1970 though many assume it was not until UEFA made their announcement in 1971 (see the section on Scotland below) that the FA ban was actually lifted.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Women’s football in England from the middle of the twentieth century***

While it is often claimed that some women received payment, either in the form of expenses or via so-called gifts, during the period of the ban, this has been often disputed, by both the records and memories of those involved in the game, and should not be regarded as a form of professionalism in any case. In the 1970s some women, such as the Manchester Corinthians player Jan Lyons, travelled to Italy as there were better opportunities, in terms of structure and competition, to play than available in England. Lyons had her accommodation paid for at Juventus but, again, this can hardly be viewed as a professional appointment, though some players in Italy were paid with Sue Lopez claiming to be the first semi-professional English player in Italian football.<sup>32</sup> Opportunities to play and be paid in England did not occur until 2000 when Fulham was acclaimed as the first professional women’s club in England.<sup>33</sup> By that time the FA had been in control of women’s football for seven years but the Fulham experience ended with the withdrawal of financial support from the club’s owner.<sup>34</sup> It was claimed that around £5m had been spent on Fulham Ladies between 2000 and 2006.



Widespread professionalisation did not occur until the 2010s and when the FA Women's Super League (WSL) was established in 2011 it was a semi-professional league before, in 2018–2019, a restructure required all clubs in the WSL to move to full-time status.<sup>35</sup> While the move to a professional structure is a progressive one, much still needs to be achieved and recent research by Culvin has highlighted that professionalism in English football has created insecure and precarious work for women.<sup>36</sup> Of course, had the FA ban never occurred and women's football been allowed to develop naturally, it is possible professionalism in women's football would now be a mature, successful model.

## Scotland

### *Women's football in Scotland by 1921*

Women's football has a long history in Scotland and can be traced back to 1628, but the modern association game began in earnest during World War One.<sup>37</sup> There had been a brief, but limited, attempt to establish the women's game twice, once in the 1880s and again in the 1890s. However, after some initial excitement and publicity, the teams faded away and there are few records to suggest other regular teams emerging. A more sustained growth in the women's game developed during World War One. Women's teams developed out of the munitions factories and other organisations across Scotland, with a dominance of teams emerging in the industrial heartlands. The regularity that teams played varied significantly, with some teams formed on an ad hoc basis specifically for localised events, such as the annual workplace fun days, whilst others played more regular matches between other local teams. The recurring feature of both types of sides was that their games were played to raise funds for war or local charities.<sup>38</sup> The first formal British competition amongst these 'munitionette' teams took place in August 1917 at Celtic Park in Glasgow.

### *Scotland and the 1921 English Football Association ban*

There has long been a misconception in the academic literature around women's football history that Scotland's Football Association mirrored the actions of the English FA by introducing a formal ban on women playing their games on affiliated grounds in late 1921. Indeed, reliance on the press of the time would lead one to the conclusion that a ban had been introduced. For example, the Glasgow *Herald* in an article entitled 'Measures to prevent women footballers', offered support for the ban and re-printed sections of the English resolution.<sup>39</sup> While *Scottish Sport* focused on the medical justifications for the adoption of this resolution 'as they consider the game

unsuitable for females' and therefore, the argued that any similar action by the SFA 'would appear to have a good deal of support'.<sup>40</sup> However, a close examination of the SFA records clearly shows that no such ban was formalised at that time. The SFA's attitude towards the women's game was nonetheless wholly unsupportive. As the *Daily Record* noted, 'There is probably more wisdom in the indifference of the Scots legislators than in the threatened veto of the southern confreres.'<sup>41</sup> Indeed, amongst the Scottish press at least there seemed to be a wide held belief that the women's game would naturally fade away once the war was over and public support waned.<sup>42</sup> SFA minutes note that, 'this Association does not approve of clubs arranging or sponsoring or letting grounds for Ladies' football matches'.<sup>43</sup> However, no formal ban was put in place until after World War Two and instead requests from clubs to host women's matches were actively discouraged by the SFA.<sup>44</sup>

### ***What happened to women's football in Scotland immediately after the FA ban?***

The digitisation of a number of regional newspapers has allowed deeper research in this period and the picture which emerges is far more complex than has been acknowledged previously in the historiography. In contrast to other areas of Great Britain and Ireland, women's football in Scotland continued to develop in the interwar years. The most successful teams of the period were the Rutherglen Ladies F.C. during the 1920s and Edinburgh City Ladies F.C. in the 1930s. Each team dominated the Scottish football scene in their respective decades. The Rutherglen Ladies team has been overlooked, yet it was a significant team for over a decade. They played to crowds in the thousands and attracted coverage in local and national Scottish newspapers. The team played all over Scotland and toured Ireland widely in 1927, something which was only replicated by Dick, Kerr Ladies and Feminina.<sup>45</sup> Their tours consisted of playing a mix of local teams or the team's own B-side, often renamed for the match, where local opponents were unavailable. The tour was so successful that a team of Irish players then toured Scotland and northern England with Rutherglen Ladies. This was a pattern which was repeated again in 1928.<sup>46</sup> By 1929 the impact of economic depression was clearly having a direct impact on the team and few games took place until 1932 when the team was revived with moderate success. But by the outbreak of World War Two the team's fortunes were on the wane and the Edinburgh City Ladies F.C., which had been founded only a few years earlier in 1937, were on the rise to take over as Scotland's premier women's team.

SFA formally minuted a ban on women playing on affiliated pitches in September 1949.<sup>47</sup> The Scottish ban stayed in place for the next 25 years.<sup>48</sup> In 1971, UEFA recommended to the national associations that

they should recognise their national women's game and develop an international structure to support its development. A vote amongst member associations resulted in 31 voting in favour of this and one, Scotland, voting against.<sup>49</sup> In spite of the continuation of the ban, the Scottish Women's Football Association was formed by six teams in 1972 without affiliation or recognition from the SFA.<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, the SFA's hand was forced by the impending introduction of the Sex Discrimination Bill and they finally agreed to lift the ban and give 'recognition to women's football' in August of 1974.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Women's football in Scotland from the middle of the twentieth century***

Recent research by Fraser has explored the development of the women's game in post-war Scotland. She has demonstrated that 36 teams played regularly across Scotland during the 1960s.<sup>52</sup> Leading to the formation of an informal national league in 1968, comprising of six teams initially, rising to 14 by 1978.<sup>53</sup> A lack of recognition and funding played a significant role in the post-war development of the game. However, the geographical spread of the population of Scotland has arguably always caused issues for the women's game, with the cost and travel time a significant factor in the arrangement of league fixtures. Nonetheless, in the post-war period, there is evidence of teams in local communities, often from workplaces, playing regular matches and from there the most successful teams were established and ultimately joined the national league. Fraser has argued that it was from the 1960s onwards that we see the development of a cohesive football community across Scotland for female players and it is from there that the current game and structure has developed.<sup>54</sup> When taken together with new research by Skillen on the interwar period, these studies have uncovered localised community networks in certain parts of Scotland before 1960, which though not formally organised within league structures, suggest that this development has longer roots than has been previously recognised.<sup>55</sup>

Hargreaves has noted that the development of women's sport is rarely a linear transition between phases, but rather a series of steps forward and steps back.<sup>56</sup> It is therefore likely that the development of the women's game in Scotland experienced a similar pattern. The impact of the introduction of a ban much later in Scotland than has previously been acknowledged however raises the possibility that there was a break or even a retardation of the women's game during the late 1940s and 1950s followed by a resurgence in the 1960s. Only further research can help us piece together this complex picture.

## Northern Ireland

### *Women's football in Northern Ireland by 1921*

Modern women's football on the island of Ireland followed a similar pattern to Scotland. Although there are references to women's football throughout the island during this period in newspapers, the majority of the activity took place in the northeast, in what became Northern Ireland from 1921. The earliest known record of football on the island was the 1895 tour by the British Ladies team.<sup>57</sup> After a second tour the following year there seems to be a gap in newspaper reports until World War I. The first boom in women's football started in 1917, when charity matches were organised to support the war effort. The concentration of activity was mainly in Belfast, Lurgan and Portadown. One of the most successful match organisers was Diana Scott, her husband Walter was the secretary for the Distillery Football Club.<sup>58</sup> On 29 March 1921, Mrs Walter Scott as she is mostly referred to in the newspapers became one of the first female football administrators to be honoured with a testimonial game. Approximately 10,000 people attended the women's international between Ireland and England at Windsor Park in Belfast.<sup>59</sup> The venue for this match is also significant as it is the stadium that hosts men's senior international matches and a venue that even the current senior women's team did not have available to them during their recent European Championship qualifying campaign in 2021.<sup>60</sup>

### *Northern Ireland and the 1921 English Football Association ban*

It is unclear if the English FA ban was ever discussed by the Irish Football Association (IFA) as there is no reference to it in the archives. Playwright, Tara Lynne O'Neill has done extensive research into women's soccer in Northern Ireland during this period for the play *Rough Girls*. She has yet to come across any reference to it being discussed by the IFA in their archive or in the newspapers from that period.<sup>61</sup> However, 1921 was also a significant year for men's soccer in Ireland as this is the year that the Leinster Football Association broke away from the IFA to form what was called the Irish Free State and more recently the Football Association of Ireland (FAI).<sup>62</sup> With both governing bodies competing against each other for recognition as the official governing body for the whole island, it would seem that women playing football on their affiliated grounds was not a big concern.

### *What happened to women's football in Northern Ireland immediately after the FA ban?*

There was some domestic football activity in Northern Ireland after the English FA introduced their ban on women playing football on affiliated

grounds. However, there was not the same level of participation as seen during World War One. There were numerous attempts to bring teams from France and England to Northern Ireland in the early 1920s but these did not happen. It was not until 1925 that a French team came to Belfast to play against Dick, Kerr Ladies at Windsor Park as part of a wider tour of Ireland that also included Dublin.<sup>63</sup> The Rutherglen Ladies F.C. tour in 1927 was a significant turning point for women's football both in Ireland and Scotland. Large crowds attended the games that were organised, with at least eight matches played (roughly four in Northern Ireland and four in the Irish Free State). It was through this tour when an Irish selection played against Scotland that the talent of Molly Seaton started to get widely recognised by the press. This tour was followed closely by an Irish selection travelling to Scotland later in the year and again in 1928. Seaton spent some time playing with Rutherglen during these tours as well.<sup>64</sup> The second boom period for women's football was in the 1930s and women have consistently played football in Northern Ireland since the formation of the state, although the levels of participation have varied over the years.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Women's football in Northern Ireland from the middle of the twentieth century***

Although women's football was not banned by the IFA that does not mean that it did not face any barriers. Individual members and clubs may have been supportive but there was no strategic support from the IFA during this period. The Northern Ireland Women's Football Association (NIWFA) was formed in 1972 to govern women's football in Northern Ireland. This body was independent of the IFA but an affiliate member of the Women's Football Association based in London.<sup>66</sup> In 1993 the NIWFA became an affiliated member of the IFA.<sup>67</sup> There was a restructure on how state funding for sport governing bodies was distributed. The Sports Council policy at this time was that it would not fund two separate governing bodies for the one sport. This resulted in many independent women's sports bodies amalgamating or merging with men's governing bodies in the early 1990s. These mergers also happened in other countries such as the Republic of Ireland. As Nicholson states, these mergers effectively dissolved more governance roles in women's sport.<sup>68</sup> However, with the recent success of the Northern Ireland Women's National Team in qualifying for the 2022 European Championships in England, the IFA has vowed to invest more into women's soccer and put in place the support structure needed to build on this success.<sup>69</sup>

## Republic of Ireland (Irish Free State)

### *Women's football in the Republic of Ireland by 1921*

The only records of women's football in what was called the Irish Free State after partition in 1921 and in what is now known as the Republic of Ireland, are of the British Ladies tour of 1895 and 1896. In 1895 they played one match in Dublin but it was not as successful as their match in Belfast in terms of press coverage and attendance. The 1896 tour was the second time that the team had visited Ireland and was a much more extensive programme.<sup>70</sup> On their second tour, they visited Dublin along with regional towns, such as Wexford and Drogheda.<sup>71</sup> When visiting Drogheda, they had difficulty in securing a ground to play on and were forced to play in a field on the outskirts of the town. The match received a lot of negative coverage from the local press in County Louth. The *Dundalk Democrat* referred to the British Ladies Football Club as 'at present invading Ireland'.<sup>72</sup> In an angry letter to the Editor of the *Drogheda Independent*, who signed it off as Pro Bono Publico, wanted to register their protest strongly at:

Exhibitions of this kind being allowed an entrance to our Irish towns. I hope that the good sense and religious feeling of the people of Drogheda will keep them away from exhibitions in which women unsex themselves and violate the rules of ordinary decency.<sup>73</sup>

One journalist for the *Drogheda Independent* stated that 'we are not yet in Ireland educated up to the standard of "the new woman", and it is hoped that it may be long until we are'.<sup>74</sup> Through the Mapping Irish Football project, we can see that most of the activity is focused around the six counties that would later become Northern Ireland. However, we cannot say for certain that there was no women's soccer in the rest of the island up until 1921 as the only source material available are newspaper archives.<sup>75</sup>

### *Republic of Ireland and the 1921 English Football Association ban*

As discussed above 1921 was a significant year for men's soccer in Ireland as this is the year that the Leinster Football Association broke away from the IFA to form the FAI.<sup>76</sup> There is no reference in the finding aid for the FAI Archive to anything about women's football which indicates how little space was given to discussions of women's football in that period.<sup>77</sup> In addition to the political struggles amongst the governing bodies, there is also the consideration that soccer was possibly not played by huge numbers of women as the Irish economy in the Irish Free State was predominantly based on agriculture rather than industry. Thus, limiting the opportunity for many women to access the sport unlike in Northern Ireland and Britain where women's employment appears to have often

provided a gateway into the sport. However, further research into this period is required to understand the full range of women's sporting practices.

### ***What happened to women's football in Republic of Ireland immediately after the ban?***

With the formation of the FAI, soccer in the 1920s, in the Irish Free State, flourished and many new clubs were established for the first time in parts of Ireland.<sup>78</sup> It is still unknown if this growth in the popularity of soccer led to the formation of women's teams. The Free State Purity League policed a ban on 'foreign' forms of fashion and entertainment. This also included women's soccer in 1925 when the French Ladies Football Team were banned from playing an exhibition match in Dublin after they played in Belfast.<sup>79</sup> While this organisation was powerful enough to stop a football match taking place there seems to be no reference to them in the historiography. It is possible that the newspaper could have been referring to the Irish Vigilance Association.<sup>80</sup> Just two years later there was a tour of Ireland by the Scottish team Rutherglen Ladies F.C., in 1927, followed by another in 1928. Unlike the French tour, there does not seem to have been any opposition to the matches taking place in the Free State. The team started their tour in Belfast and played challenge matches against a team from Edinburgh. They travelled through Ireland down to Cork and on their return trip to Dublin they played against a local team that the *Evening Herald* had dubbed 'Dublin's first ladies' soccer team'. As with many women's matches in England up until the ban the proceeds of the game were donated to charity. The proceeds of this match went to Holles Street Hospital in Dublin. The match took place in Milltown, which was home to the League of Ireland side, Shamrock Rovers, which would also indicate that there was no formal FAI ban on women's football.<sup>81</sup>

Tours of women's teams such as the ones by Rutherglen were seen as a novelty and possibly received more media coverage than local sides playing because of this. However, these tours should also be viewed in the context of what was happening in men's football at the time. In 1925, at a conference between the four home nations governing bodies, it was decided that no British club would play a match in the Free State during the close season. The animosity between the FAI and IFA intensified towards the end of the 1920s. As the IFA had the support of the home nations there were no club matches or internationals between the Free State and teams from Great Britain.<sup>82</sup> Thus, these tours demonstrate the strength of the women's game in Scotland to be able to organise an international tour of the island of Ireland despite the issues between the two Irish governing bodies. Matches like this would have drawn reasonable

interest considering the dearth of international teams visiting the Free State during this period.

After the Rutherglen Ladies tour in 1927 and 1928, news reports on women's soccer in the Republic of Ireland seem to disappear until the sixties. The combination of the introduction of the 1935 Conditions of Employment Act which led to restrictions of areas of women's employment and the Irish Constitution introduced in 1937, firmly placed women's role in society in the home. There is anecdotal evidence that many priests blocked women from playing Gaelic football in the late sixties so it is plausible to suggest that this would also apply to soccer.<sup>83</sup> The reasons for this are unique to the Republic of Ireland and warrant further research to understand what impact the Catholic church, as well as successive conservative governments, had on the development of women's sport.

### ***Women's football in Republic of Ireland from the middle of the twentieth century***

Soccer in the Republic of Ireland really flourished in the late 1960s onwards with new clubs and leagues springing up all over the country.<sup>84</sup> Anne O'Brien became one of the first contemporary female players to sign a professional contract to play football in Britain and Ireland when she signed for Stade de Reims in France, paving the way for other players in Ireland and Britain to turn professional in countries such as France, Belgium, and Italy. However, by moving abroad Anne O'Brien ended her international career with the Republic of Ireland. Unlike the WFA and SWFA, the LFAI did not have a ban on players who played professional football. The reason why players who moved abroad for work, education or to play professional football were not called up for national team duties was because of finance. The LFAI had very little money and up until recently could only select players based in Ireland.<sup>85</sup> It is also believed by talented provincial players that this also led to a Dublin bias in team selection.<sup>86</sup> Even to date, if female players from the Republic and Northern Ireland want to play professional football they need to travel overseas. There has never been a fully professional soccer team on the island of Ireland. In fact, many players still have to pay to play for their club in the National League or find a sponsor to cover this fee.<sup>87</sup> Even in the men's game the Irish League and the League of Ireland has only managed to be semi-professional in recent years.<sup>88</sup> As mentioned above, the IFA is investing more in the governance structures of the women's game. However, the FAI in contrast is doing the complete opposite and have dismantled the current structure by making the Head of Women's Football redundant and merging the management of the women's game with men's game. There is no current strategic plan



for women's football and it is unclear if there will be one published or if it will be integrated into the main FAI Strategic Plan.<sup>89</sup>

## **Wales**

### ***Women's football in Wales by 1921***

Women's football in Wales owes much to influences from England. For example, a women's team was formed in Norwood (Swansea) in March 1894, as well as a team across the border in Hereford at Christ's Hospital Girls School.<sup>90</sup> The London-based British Ladies Football Club, embarked on two tours in 1895 and 1896, which included Wales. The tour featured two teams from London playing each other (Reds v Blues), however, one game occurred against a men's team in Cardiff. In 1896, the British Ladies played other men's teams, inspiring young girls in Pontypool to request a bladder from a local butcher to convert into a ball.<sup>91</sup> However, the impact of these tours was limited in terms of kick-starting women's football in Wales.

World War One provided significant stimulus to the women's game with munitions teams being formed for keeping the new female workforce fit and healthy as well as amused. Their games raised funds for both local charities and in aid of the wider war effort. The first league was established in 1917–1918, called South Wales Women's Munitions League, with three silver cups as prizes.<sup>92</sup> Newport Ladies won the League in its first season, with the National Shell Factory Swansea winning the Munitions Cup in 1918. In the North of Wales, one game held on Boxing Day 1917, was played in Wrexham between two munitions factory teams: Powell's (Girls) Athletic v Aintree Filling Factory (Liverpool). The Merseyside team won 5-0. Welsh teams, such as Llanelly Ladies' Football Club, Hengoed Girls, and Pengam Garden Village Girls, continued to play after One to raise funds up to and beyond 1921.<sup>93</sup>

### ***Wales and the 1921 English Football Association ban***

Objections in Wales to women playing football seemed to stem predominantly from the religious sector, prior to the official ban, in 1918 two chapels' congregations from Cwmbwrla (Swansea) took objection to women playing on a local park going as far as writing to the mayor stating, 'We strongly object against the great degradation that has taken place recently in our town in allowing females to play football at the park.'<sup>94</sup>

The banning of women playing on affiliated grounds was implemented by the Football Association Wales (FAW) on 3 March 1922, 'The Council

decided that in the interests of the game they cannot allow matches to take place between ladies' teams on Welsh grounds.<sup>95</sup> Short, sharp and nowhere as detailed as the ban in England, this approach would be adjusted over a period occasionally allowing charitable games to be played in South Wales, though bizarrely, the games often granted permission did not involve Welsh teams. For example, Dick, Kerr Ladies played teams from France in Wales and one match against Cardiff City Ladies at Ninian Park to raise funds for the Lord Mayor's Distress Fund 29 March 1921.<sup>96</sup>

The ban was in place for 48 years in Wales but, as with the other nations, the FAW was unable to stop women playing in fields, cricket pitches and rugby grounds. The wording of the ban was revisited to create Rule 34, which states that:

No football match in which any lady or ladies take part in any way whatsoever shall be permitted to be played on any football ground within the jurisdiction of this Association. Clubs, officials, players or referees are not permitted to associate themselves in any way whatsoever with Ladies Football matches.<sup>97</sup>

The rewording and further endorsement of the ban came on 29 August 1939.<sup>98</sup> A game between a Barry selects (comprised of players from two local women's teams) and Bolton Ladies, which was scheduled for 24 July 1948. However, Herbert Powell, General Secretary of the Welsh FA, refused to allow the game to go ahead on Jenner Park, as this was affiliated to the men's team. Instead, the game was switched to Maslin Park on Barry Island. Bolton were the victors 13-0. The Barry team went on to play Bolton twice over the 1949 Spring Bank Holiday.<sup>99</sup>

### ***What happened to women's football after the 1921 English Football Association ban?***

Women's football continued, more so in South Wales, with the international team and domestic games continuing to raise funds for charities. Most significant amongst these games was the match between Dick, Kerr Ladies and Olympic de Paris on 22 March 1922 at Cardiff Arms Park, only nineteen days after the FAW ban. Permission for the match to go ahead came from the Marquis of Bute. 15,000 attended the match which raised £655.00 towards the restoration of Reims Cathedral. Welsh teams began to evolve through former members of the munition sides developing their own local clubs in order to keep playing, such as Lovell's of Newport Ladies which was one of the most successful examples of this.<sup>100</sup> On 10 October 1932 Lovell's played Cardiff Ladies in the first floodlit game for Welsh women in front of 8000 people.<sup>101</sup> Other new teams formed, such as Trethomas Bluebirds and Machen Ladies who would go on to compete with Newport and Cardiff. The largest attendances were at matches hosted by men's teams on their grounds in order to cash in and raise funds. Ystrad Mynach

Albion FC hosted a match on 18 April 1933, which attracted a crowd of 2000–3000 with the aforementioned teams playing.<sup>102</sup>

The impact of the ban was felt across the country with many former players referring to the decision-makers at the FAW as ‘dinosaurs’. The FAW did not rescind the ban on playing on affiliated grounds until 29 May 1970. There were no Welsh leagues running until 1972 when a 10-club league was established in South Wales. This comprised mainly factory teams such as Johnson Rangers (Bottle Top factory from Port Talbot and Maurice Cohen sponsored by a local lingerie manufacturer) and <sup>103</sup>. Nonetheless, when the 1966 World Cup was contested in England many Welsh girls were inspired to play football<sup>104</sup> Examples include sisters Mai and Eleri Griffith, from Trefriw in the Conwy valley, who started playing in their youth club in Llanrwst. Later in 1969, the family moved to Prestatyn and this led to the formation of a team that would dominate the Merseyside & Wirral Women’s Football League from 1972 for almost a decade. Prestatyn Ladies became affiliated to the men’s team but for two years played games for charity. Their popularity drew crowds, with one fixture attracting 3000 people when they played Foden’s of Cheshire played on the field adjacent to the men’s ground on Bastion Road.

### ***Women’s football in Wales from the middle of the twentieth century***

With the establishment of the Women’s Football Association (WFA) in England in 1969, the FAW were happy for the WFA to look after teams in Wales. In 1971, the FAW’s contribution to the UEFA directive resulted in South Wales FA appointing the first Wales national manager. Grey Phillips, a 41-year old police constable from Swansea. The WFA approved the selection and agreed to pay Grey’s expenses with an opportunity to discuss mutual issues.<sup>105</sup> Grey assisted in managing the Johnson Rangers team while selecting an international squad for Wales. Their first international match was against the Republic of Ireland on May 13, 1973 played at Stebonheath Park, Llanelli in front of an estimated 3500.<sup>106</sup> In August 1974, it was noted that the Welsh League held meetings with Welsh clubs and there were about eight clubs affiliated. The Welsh Sports Council did not recognise the WFA, so no grants were forthcoming to aid the development of a Welsh League affiliated to the WFA.

Wales was invited to play in Italy in 1978 in what the press and some of the players were led to believe was the ‘Mini World Cup’, although ultimately UEFA and FIFA refused to recognise this and the subsequent 1979 tournament.<sup>107</sup> The Italian federation had obtained sponsorship from various companies and businessmen who paid for the travel and accommodation for each team. This consisted of the hosts, Wales, Scotland, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and Switzerland. This event proved to be a massive learning curve, playing in high temperatures and against teams who were more experienced. The

tournament was such a success that Wales were invited back in 1979, this time with 11 other teams in contention. Once more there were no victories but the quality of play showed a marked improvement.<sup>108</sup>

On the domestic front Welsh teams were abandoning the Welsh League to join the Western League (1976) in England with Cardiff West End, Newport Nightingales, and Llanedeyrn (who would evolve into Cardiff City Ladies) joining. The Western League became two divisions, with seven teams in each. As the WFA endured financial issues in the early 1990s, negotiations were held with the FAW to take over the administration of women's football for the 1992–1993 season.<sup>109</sup> Michele Adams, Laura McAllister, and Karen Jones (players from Cardiff Ladies) met with Alun Evans (FAW General Secretary) for his support in the development of women's football in Wales, including the reforming of the national team which had not played since 1989. The FAW appointed Lyn Jones as Women's Team Manager, who was also the manager of Inter Cardiff men's team. Alun Evans with Michele Adams as team manager took 16 players to form two teams to compete in the Four Nations Indoor Championship 5-a-side tournament, 28th November 1992 in Glasgow to convince the FAW Council to revive the National team. The FAW then organised the Women's Welsh FA Challenge Cup including Welsh teams playing in English Leagues. The final was played prior to the men's Welsh Cup Final at The National Stadium in Cardiff on 16 May 1993. The National Stadium in Cardiff on 16th May 1993 between Inter Cardiff Ladies ( Cardiff Ladies affiliated with men's team January 1993) and 1-0 winner's Pilkingtons Ladies (St. Asaph). Wales also entered the UEFA Women's Championship for the first time in 1993–1994. They were in the same qualification group as Switzerland, Germany, and Croatia, but had no wins, illustrating how wide the gap was.

The first affiliated league the FAW administered was the U16's South Wales Girls League in 1994 which consisted of 12 teams including one from Cheltenham.<sup>110</sup> Later that year the Texaco Women's League was formed by the local council and would later become FAW affiliated. The first national women's league was formed in 2009 with five teams in the North and five in the South. In 2021, there was a league restructure, with the National league reduced to eight teams.

## Conclusion

The English FA is the oldest governing body in football and a key organisation in developing the rule book for contemporary association football. Many have assumed that once they banned women from playing football on affiliated grounds that other governing bodies followed suit. However, this article highlights that this was not the case. Although the SFA and FAW did implement bans at later dates it was on their own terms rather than blindly following the

FA. We can also see that there is no evidence that such a ban was implemented by the governing bodies in Ireland. Although these associations did not follow the FA's 1921 ban, the associated national and local media discussions of it, did have a massive impact on the public perception of women's football. The ban legitimised both the formal and, importantly, the informal exclusion of women's teams by the other male-dominated governing bodies. This article gives a succinct overview of women's football across Britain and Ireland in the period leading up to the ban, just after the ban and the impact this has had on the contemporary game.

While this article is only a starting point for more detailed regional analysis across the five countries, it is clear from the research highlighted here that even a singular case study of England is not representative of the complexities of developments within the country, therefore more in-depth analysis at a regional level is needed if we are to understand the broader developments. These studies would, for example, help us to better understand the ways in which women's football grew, in and between, different regions during different time periods and the role of relationships between organisers/administrators and players across the five nations and beyond. These relationships were the bedrock in which the WFA were eventually able to form a sustainable governing body for women's football in 1969. It was established by forty three teams across England and one from the Republic of Ireland.<sup>111</sup> The following year 144 teams were represented at the first Annual General Meeting for the WFA, including one team from Nigeria.<sup>112</sup> The complexity of these developments is only going to be fully understood with a detailed analysis of the networks which existed.

This regional approach is currently developing across Britain and Ireland and the initial findings, such as those outlined in this article, are helping to add depth to our collective understanding of the women's game. As we outline there has been some important recent historical analysis emerging on the game in Scotland and to a lesser extent Ireland. However, we have also highlighted the game in Wales has been, until this publication, completely ignored by both the academic and non-academic community.

This year's centenary of the FA ban in England and the 50th anniversary of UEFA's recognition of women's football is an important moment to pause and reconsider the history of the sport. As we have demonstrated here there is much that we still do not know, but new research is emerging which is helping us to make sense of the impact of the FA ban.

## Notes

1. Fiona Skillen and Carol A. Osborne, 'It's Good to Talk: Oral History, Sports History and Heritage', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1883–98, 1890.

2. The newspaper digitised is the Manchester Evening News but its rival the Manchester Evening Chronicle paid more attention to football, while both newspapers saved their best football coverage for their Saturday evening sporting newspapers. None of which have been digitised.
3. Early research includes: David J Williamson, *Belles of the Ball: The Early History of Women's Football* (Devon: R&D Associates, 1991); John Williams and J. Woodhouse, 'Can Play, Will Play? Women and Football in Britain' in *British Football and Social Change*, eds. John Williams and Steve Wagg (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991); Gertrud Pfister, Kari Fasting, Sheila Scraton and Benilde Vazquez, 'Women and Football – A Contradiction? The Beginnings of Women's Football in Four European Countries', *European Sports History Review* 1 (1998): 1–26; Alethea Elisabeth-Anne Melling, 'Ladies' Football': Gender and the Socialisation of Women Football Players in Lancashire c.1916–1960' (PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 1999).
4. Carrie Dunn, *The Roar of the Lionesses: Women's Football in England* (Durrington: Pitch Publishing, 2016); Kate Themen and Jenny van Hooff, 'Kicking against Tradition: Women's Football, Negotiating Friendships and Social Spaces', *Leisure Studies* 36, no. 40 (2017): 542–552; Gail J. Newsham, *In a League of their own: The Dick, Kerr Ladies 1917–1965* (Preston: Paragon, 2018); Gary James, *Manchester City Women: An Oral History* (Halifax: James Ward, 2019); Jean Williams, *A Game for Rough Girls? A History of Women's Football in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2003).
5. Alex Culvin, 'Football as Work: The New Realities of Professional Women Footballers in England' (PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2019).
6. Bolton has published a variety of online articles such as Steve Bolton, 'Carmen Pomies: The Most important Woman Footballer in History', *Playing Pasts*, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/carmen-pomiesthe-most-important-woman-footballer-in-historypart/> (accessed June 8, 2021); Gary James, 'Establishing Women in Sports History: Manchester City Football Club', *Sport in History* 40, no. 4 (2020): 434–455.
7. Karen Fraser, 'Sisters Doing it for Themselves: The Rich History of Women's Football in Scotland from the 1960s to 2020', *Sport in History*, 40, no. 2 (2021): 456–81. Jess Macbeth,, 'The Development of Women's Football in Scotland', *Sports Historian* 22, no. 2 (2002): 149–63. Jess Macbeth, 'Women's Football in Scotland: An Historical Perspective', in *Women, Football and Europe: Histories, Equity and Experiences*, eds. Jonathan Magee, Jayne Caudwell, Katie Liston, and Sheila Scraton (Oxford: Meyer and Meyer, 2007), 3–26. Margot McCuiag, 'A Brief History of Women's Football' (2000), Scottish Football Museum Archives. S. Macmillan, *The Forgotten Twelve: An Investigation into the Availability of Archival Material about Scottish Women's Football and Why It Is Worthy of Consideration* (Masters Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2015).
8. Karen Fraser, 'Against the Run of Play: The History of Women's Football in Scotland 1960–2020' (PhD Thesis University of Stirling, 2021).
9. Helena Byrne, 'Where Are We Now? A Review of Research on the History of Women's Soccer in Ireland', *Sport in History* 39, no. 2 (2019): 166–86.
10. Katie Liston, Helena Byrne, and Maeve O'Riordan (eds.), 'Women in Sport', *Studies in Arts in Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2021): 7–17.
11. Stuart Gibbs, 'When Women's Football Came to the Island', *Studies in Arts and Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2021): 35–57; Helge Faller, 'Part of the Game: The

- First Fifty Years of Women's Football in Ireland and the International Context', *Studies in Arts and Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2021): 58–84.
12. Helena Byrne et. al, 'Dataset: Mapping Irish Football', British Library Research Repository, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.23636/ndrx-sf60> (accessed January 21, 2022); Helena Byrne, 'Mapping Irish Women's Football', British Library Newsroom Blog, June 11, 2020. <https://blogs.bl.uk/thenewsroom/2020/06/mapping-irish-womens-football.html> (accessed June 28, 2021).
  13. A number of individual researchers have been helpful in sharing their findings in relation to international and domestic teams from Wales; Georgina Gittins, Stuart Gibbs, Stephen Bolton, Martin Johnes and Daniel Mooney, Jeff McNery, Rob Glaves, Jon Edwards and Colin Staples.
  14. For example, 'Lady Football Players', *Athletic News*, June 22, 1881, 7; 'Disorderly Scene at a Women's Football Match', *Manchester Guardian*, June 22, 1881, 8.
  15. 'A Game of Football', *Derbyshire Times*, January 21, 1899, 7. This article refers to girls playing football in the Market Place, Riddings on January 2, 1899. 'A Swinton dribbler', *South Yorkshire Times*, April 6, 1894, 6. This article discusses 'several young women' playing football in the street with men in Station Street, Swinton, Mexborough.
  16. Manchester established a 12 club league for teams playing within ten miles of its city centre and that league also applied unsuccessfully for affiliation to the FA. 'A Ladies Football League', *Aberdeen Evening Express*, July 21, 1917, 1; 'Ladies as Leaguers', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, September 22, 1917, 3.
  17. Sue Lopez, *Women on the Ball* (London: Scarlet Press, 1997).
  18. Gail J. Newsham, *In a League of their Own: The Dick, Kerr Ladies 1917–1965* (Preston: Paragon, 2018). Newsham has been researching, writing and publishing on Dick, Kerr Ladies since the 1980s. She has published several ground-breaking histories and has been working with media companies on various initiatives to promote their story. This includes books aimed at promoting football to young girls, such as Eve Ainsworth, *Kicking Off: Dick, Kerr Girls* (Preston: UCLAN Publishing, 2020).
  19. 'Football', *Gloucester Citizen*, January 10, 1921, 5. The Goodison Park attendance was estimated at between 45,000 and 53,000 with thousands locked out in a variety of contemporary newspapers, see 'Latest Football Gossip', *Dundee Courier*, December 29, 1920, 6; 'Sporting Items', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, December 28, 1920, 3.
  20. For example, 'Women Footballers', *Manchester Evening News*, June 11, 1921, 3; 'Woman (sic) Footballers', *Cheshire Observer*, July 2, 1921, 3; 'Football by Ladies', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, May 5, 1921, 7.
  21. See Alethea Elisabeth-Anne Melling, 'Ladies' Football': Gender and the Socialisation of Women Football Players in Lancashire c.1916–1960' (PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 1999).
  22. Jean Williams, *A Game for Rough Girls? A History of Women's Football in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2003), 35.
  23. 'Mustn't train the girls: FA ban Jimmy Broad', *Chelmsford Chronicle*, July 14, 1950, 1. For more on Broad, see Gary James, 'The Sporting Broads: A Family's Journey from Pedestrianism to Football' in *Pedestrianism*, ed. Dave Day (Crewe: MMU Sport and Leisure History, 2014), 195–212.
  24. 'Ladies' FA', *Northern Daily Mail*, December 20, 1921, 5; 'A Ladies' Football Association', *Lancashire Evening Post*, December 14, 1921, 2.



25. 'English Ladies Football Association', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, February 20, 1922, 3.
26. 'Women's FA dissolved', *Shields Daily News*, December 23, 1931, 8.
27. Steve Bolton, (2021), 'Guest Blog – Steve Bolton: The Pioneering Manchester Ladies', <https://gjfootballarchive.com/2021/02/26/guest-blog-steve-bolton-the-pioneering-manchester-ladies-part-one/> (accessed June 1, 2021).
28. During 1988–1989 many prominent members of Corinthians left the club to join the newly established Manchester City team and the club folded, although it was resurrected the following decade for a while. See Gary James, 'Establishing Women in Sports History: Manchester City Football Club', *Sport in History* 40, no. 4 (2020), 435.
29. 'East Kent girls to face challenge from Southampton', *East Kent Times*, November 70, 1969, 14.
30. Sue Lopez, *Women on the Ball* (London: Scarlet Press, 1997), 56.
31. On 21 January 1970, the FA's Denis Follows wrote to Arthur Hobbs at the WFA stating that the FA had agreed to allow women's teams from playing on grounds under the jurisdiction of the FA in a recent council meeting. See Sue Lopez, *Women on the Ball* (London: Scarlet Press, 1997), 243, footnote 5.
32. Sue Lopez, *Women on the Ball* (London: Scarlet Press, 1997), 255; 'Italian Job: When Competitive Women's Football Meant Going Abroad', *When Saturday Comes*, November 2020, issue 403.
33. 'Al Fayed's Millions Offering Equal Opportunities', *Sunday Tribune*, November 26, 2000, 80; 'Important Landmarks in Women's Football', *Evening Herald*, August 29, 2007, 84. Many of the women interviewed as part of 'Women and football in Manchester project', performed by Gary James since 2017, claim that participants in a tournament organised by Arsenal Ladies in August 1990 explained how they were recruited by Arsenal on the equivalent of Youth Training Scheme contracts. Documentary evidence has yet been found to corroborate this.
34. Tony Leighton, 'Fulham Disowned in Final Fall from Grace', *Guardian*, (2006), <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2006/may/22/newsstory.sport2> (accessed June, 1, 2021).
35. Alex Culvin, 'Football as Work: The New Realities of Professional Women Footballers in England' (PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2019), 3.
36. *Ibid.*, 295.
37. Jess MacBeth, 'Women's Football in Scotland: An Interpretive Analysis' (PhD Thesis, University of Stirling, 2004), 98.
38. 'Football Freaks', *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, December 8, 1921, 4.
39. 'Measures to Prevent Women Footballers', *The Herald*, December 6, 1921, 3.
40. 'Female Football Ban', *Scottish Sport*, December 6, 1921.
41. 'Women and Football', *Daily Record*, December 5, 1921, 8.
42. 'Eve Kicks Off', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, May 17, 1920, 3.
43. 'Ladies' Football', Scottish Football Association, Minutes, January 23, 1924, Scottish National Football Museum Collection.
44. Scottish Football Association, Minutes, January 23, 1924, June 25, 1924 and March 11, 1925, Scottish National Football Museum Collection.
45. Fiona Skillen and Steve Bolton, 'Women's Football in Interwar Scotland: Sadie Smith and the Legendary Rutherglen Ladies FC', (2021), *Play Pasts*, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/womens-football-in-interwar->



- scotlandsadie-smith-and-the-legendary-rutherglen-ladies-fcpart-1/ (accessed March 28, 2021).
46. Fiona Skillen and Steve Bolton, 'Women's Football in Interwar Scotland: Sadie Smith and the Legendary Rutherglen Ladies FC: Part 2', (2021), *Play Pasts*, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/womens-football-in-interwar-scotlandsadie-smith-and-the-legendary-rutherglen-ladies-fcpart-1/> <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/womens-football-in-interwar-scotlandsadie-smith-and-the-legendary-rutherglen-ladies-fcpart-2/> (accessed March 28, 2021).
  47. Executive & General Purposes Committee, Minutes of Scottish Football Association, Sept 14, 1949. Scottish National Football Museum Collection.
  48. Executive & General Purposes Committee, Minutes of Scottish Football Association, August 29, 1974, 64. Scottish National Football Museum Collection.
  49. Sue Lopez, *Women on the Ball: A Guide to Women's Football* (London: Scarlet Press, 1997), 59.
  50. Although there are very few written records for the SWFA in this period Karen Fraser has pieced together the developments from oral history interviews of those involved in the early administration. Karen Fraser, 'Sisters Doing it for Themselves: The Rich History of Women's Football in Scotland from the 1960s to 2020', *Sport in History* 40, no. 4 (2020): 456–81, 461.
  51. Executive & General Purposes Committee, Minutes of Scottish Football Association, August 29, 1974, 64. Scottish National Football Museum Collection.
  52. Fraser, 'Sisters Doing it for Themselves', 460.
  53. Fraser, 'Sisters Doing it for Themselves', 460–1.
  54. Karen Fraser, *Against the Run of Play*, 73–128.
  55. Fiona Skillen and Skillen Bolton, 'Women's Football in Interwar Scotland: Sadie Smith and the Legendary Rutherglen Ladies FC', (2021), *Play Pasts*, <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/womens-football-in-interwar-scotlandsadie-smith-and-the-legendary-rutherglen-ladies-fcpart-1/> (accessed March 28, 2021).
  56. Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 117.
  57. Gibbs, 'When Women's Football Came to the Island', 36.
  58. Faller, 'Part of the Game', 60.
  59. Alex Jackson, 'The Pioneer of Women's Football in Ireland': A Brief History of Mrs Scott, Part One' *Playing Pasts*, March 29, (2021), <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/the-pioneer-of-ladies-football-in-ireland-a-brief-history-of-mrs-scottpart-on/> (accessed June 8, 2021).
  60. Euro 2022 play-off second leg: Northern Ireland v Ukraine, BBC iPlayer, April 13, 2021.
  61. Nicola McCarty, 'Girls with Goals', BBC Radio Ulster, Northern Ireland. December 26, 2020; The IFA papers are held at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland and have restricted access; Lyric Theatre, 'Rough Girls', <https://web.archive.org/web/20210725141411/https://lyrictheatre.co.uk/event/rough-girls/> (accessed July 25, 2021).
  62. Cormac Moore, *The Irish Soccer Split* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2015), 120.
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104. From two separate interviews with Eleri Roberts (nee Griffith) and Mai Griffith (2018 and 2017) explaining how they would watch their much older brother's play, Peris played for Gwydir Rovers of Llanrwst, Eleri was inspired from the age of 4 years old, Mai mentioned watching the 1966 World Cup on TV and wanting to play on kick-about with her friends and sister.
105. Interview with Grey Philips on July 8, 2018 along with various clippings from his scrapbook to confirm the WFA would pay his expenses, nothing was paid from the FAW.
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Mai confirmed that the Italian players were on £200 each to win the Tournament, Wales were purely amateurs.

108. In 1978 Wales were beaten 3-0 Belgium and 7-0 Italy in Pescara, Tony Sully Manager and Bill Davies both from Cardiff recruited by Ida Driscoll WWIF CEO for the Tournament, 1979 Sweden 3-0 and 2-0 Netherlands in Rimini Sylvia Gore Manager (both tournaments not acknowledged by UEFA or FIFA).
109. Patricia Gregory was the Secretary with the WFA and recalls meetings with the FAW including Alun Evans FAW General Secretary to discuss possible hand-over of administration of women's football prior to the WFA folding.
110. 12 teams from South Wales U16's Afon Lido, St.Mellons, Inter Cardiff, Cheltenham, Swansea, Bryntiron, Tongwynlais, Aberavon, Kingsbridge (Swansea) Colts, Cwmaman, Neath & Newport Strikers with transport costs to be funded by FAW from Karen Jones (Cardiff City Ladies) scrapbook, dated 1994.
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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributors

*Dr Fiona Skillen* is a senior lecturer in History in the Department of Social Sciences, in the School for Business and Society at Glasgow Caledonian University. Her research interests concern modern history, in particular aspects of sport, gender and popular culture. She is particularly interested in women's sport during the late 19th and 20th centuries and has published extensively in this area including her monograph *Sport, Women and Modernity in Interwar Britain* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013). She is a former Chair of British Society of Sport History, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and an editor of the *International Journal of the History of Sport*.

*Helena Byrne* is a librarian who specializes in web archiving as well as an independent researcher that focuses on the history of women's football in Ireland. She has also documented the early history of the indoor football leagues in County Louth, that were phenomenally popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These leagues were the gateway that led to the development of contemporary women's soccer and Gaelic football teams in the region.

*John Carrier* is an independent researcher into the evolution of women's football both domestic and international having written various articles for inclusion of Cymru international programmes about the past, as well as Black History month for 2020, JJ Heritage contribution on Sylvia Gore download article on Llay United Ladies team of 1948 for SheKicks magazine, contributor to the S4C programme

Laura McAllister: *An Equal Game* November 2022. Forth coming book “No One Listens Until The Ground Shakes” including back stories from players, managers into the evolution of women’s football in Cymru (Wales). E-mail: - j.carrier@talk21.-com Twitter: - johncarrier7.

*Dr Gary James* is an Honorary Research Fellow at De Montfort University. Since the 1980s, he has been researching the origins and development of football, publishing frequently throughout that time. His current project is documenting the history of female involvement and participation in football within the Manchester region. One of the first outputs of that project was the acclaimed *Manchester City Women: An Oral History*, published in 2019 and described in an Oral History Society review (by Fiona Cosson, April 2021) as: ‘a model for writing engaging narrative-led oral history.’ James is the founder of the International Football History Conference.

## ORCID

*Fiona Skillen*  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1218-5471>

*Helena Byrne*  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0966-4685>