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**Why has it taken so long for women's football in England to get where it is today and who are the influencers of the sport since its rebirth from the 1970's onwards?**

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Douglas, E. (2023). Members of the 1971 second unofficial Women's squad before the England versus Brazil Match with Eloise Douglas. [Photograph]. Wembley Way, London.

## Abbreviations

BLFC – British Ladies Football Club

DFB- Deutscher Fußball-Bund

ELFA - English Ladies' Football Association

FA – Football Association

FIEFF - Federation of Independent European Female Football

FIFF - International Federation of Feminin Football

FIFA - Federation of Association Football

ILFA – International Ladies Football Association

IOC – International Olympic Committee

NCAA - National Collegiate Athletic Association

NWSL - National Women's Soccer League

WFA – Women's Football Association

WiF - Women in Football

WSL – Women's Super League

## Abstract

Women's football is now one of the fastest growing sports in the world. The sport has been pioneered by many influential women over time. Two of the most significant examples of the growth of women's football is through the WFA and 1971 squad from the second unofficial Women's World Cup. The Lionesses' win at the European Championships 2022, has brought about a huge shift in the way that women's football history is being told. This thesis will bring to light the narratives of these influential groups through oral interviews and much material culture. Despite both the WFA and the 1971 squad both striving towards women's football, they had differing ways and views of how it should come about. This thesis looks into the impact that they made to the sport, as well as why neither had an immediate effect on the women's game. Additionally, external influences such as politics, societal opinions and the heritage sector have all made development in women's sport slow until recent times. Nowadays attendance figures and mainstream role models are meaning that women's football has been transformed since the 1970s. The question that does remain however is to how sustainable is this huge growth for women's sport and whether national success such as the Lionesses', is the reason it is staying afloat.

## Introduction

“Think it’s all over? It’s only just begun”.<sup>1</sup> This is Gabby Logan’s closing piece to camera as she rounds off the Women’s Euro final coverage. Logan perfectly captures the phenomena and national pride surrounding England Lionesses’ victory in these few words, she also infers that Women’s football is about to take off in a frenzy due to this. Remarkably, the first recorded women’s international match was actually in 1881, with a team self-proclaiming to be England playing a side also dubbed Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the so-called England team went on to be defeated 3-0, the question remains, why has women’s football taken so long to truly take off in public consciousness and what happened between 1881 and today?<sup>3</sup> This is the central focus of this dissertation, to uncover the heroines of women’s football mainly around 1970’s and give the players of the sport a chance to tell their stories, that may not have been heard before. In order to understand how women’s football has got to where is today, the long history of the game has to be discussed.

The first international game in 1881 cannot be credited as marking the start of the movement of female football as the reverse fixture of this match, played just a week after the first, resulted in horrendous abuse and dismissal by the public and newspapers, marking the end almost immediately after the start.<sup>4</sup> In 1895, under an assumed name, Nettie Honeyball helped to found the British Ladies Football Club (BLFC).<sup>5</sup> Honeyball spoke to newspapers about the upcoming first match of the BLFC, gaining free publicity and eventually attracting large crowds to the match.<sup>6</sup> Honeyball is the first real example of an individual and club aiming to get people involved in female football, which after the Euros especially, the public are now exposed to so much more. Much like other mavericks and heroines of the history of female football, they were shut down by the higher authority for getting too much popularity. The Football Association (FA) Council found that the BLFC were starting to attract interest and crowds, so due to this they started to warn clubs that “lady footballers should not be playing on their grounds”.<sup>7</sup> However, one of the major differences between Nettie Honeyball’s aims and making a long-term impact is the fact that she only wanted to recruit upper-middle class

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<sup>1</sup> Sheffield & Hallamshire FA. (2022). *WOMEN’S EUROS: “YOU THINK IT’S ALL OVER? IT’S ONLY JUST BEGUN.”* Euro Legacy Club, Sheffield & Hallamshire FA. <https://www.sheffieldfa.com/news/2022/aug/26/euro-legacy-club>

<sup>2</sup> Elsey, B., & Pugliese, S. G. (2017). *Football and the Boundaries of History*. Palgrave Macmillan US. Page 229

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Page 229

<sup>4</sup> Tate, T. (2018). *A Game of One’s Own: Women’s Football in Victorian Britain*. History Workshop.

<https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/sport/a-game-of-ones-own-womens-football-in-victorian-britain/>

<sup>5</sup> Elsey, B., & Pugliese, S. G. (2017). *Football and the Boundaries of History*. Palgrave Macmillan US. Page 230

<sup>6</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women’s Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 1

<sup>7</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *‘Unsuitable for Females’: The Rise of the Lionesses and Women’s Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 5

backgrounds like herself.<sup>8</sup> Honeyball was very clear when she spoke to the *Maidenhead Advertiser* stating, “If I accepted all the girls from the masses that made applications to join us, why our list would have been filled long ago”.<sup>9</sup> This quote especially highlights that although Honeyball was influential and indeed paved some of the way to allow females to play, this was not the catalyst for major growth in the sport as Honeyball only aimed at one class in society, rather than the masses.

Preston was the stronghold of football in its early days, both male and female.<sup>10</sup> Preston North End at around a similar time were making huge strides in the growing male footballing world.<sup>11</sup> In the season 1888/89 not only were they founding members of the newly formed Football League, but by winning the FA Cup and the league they were the “first team to achieve the double, doing this at the first opportunity, without losing a game or even conceding a goal in the FA Cup.”<sup>12</sup> It could be inferred that the presence of a successful male team influenced the formation of the Dick Kerr’s Ladies in Preston in 1894 and they were just as prominent as the men’s.<sup>13</sup> Alfred Frankland was the “manager of the Dick Kerr munitions factory in Lancashire” and set the popular team up.<sup>14</sup> The team were treated like ladies by Frankland, the typical “perfect gentleman”.<sup>15</sup> Jacobs argued that class wars were stronger and more prominent than gender wars surrounding the time of the First World War which explains the way women were treated.<sup>16</sup> Yet again, the growth of female football would have to wait until the class divides could be put to rest. On the other hand, that does not dispute the fact that individuals such as Lily Parr were a huge influence on the future of female football. Parr was as close as possible to the equivalent of a household name today, with just under a thousand goals in her career.<sup>17</sup> Indeed her story has been written about much more thoroughly now than the heroes of female football who are still around today.

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<sup>8</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *'Unsuitable for Females': The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 7

<sup>9</sup> Lee, J. F. (2012). *The lady footballers and the British press, 1895*. Critical Survey (Oxford, England), 24(1), 88-101. <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2012.240107> Page 92 - 93

<sup>10</sup> The FA. (2023). THE STORY OF WOMEN’S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers>

<sup>11</sup> Preston North End. *The History of Preston North End*. Preston North End. <https://www.pnefc.net/club/club-history/>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> The FA. (2023). THE STORY OF WOMEN’S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers>

<sup>14</sup> Clarke, G. (2019). *SoccerWomen: The Icons, Rebels, Stars, and Trailblazers Who Transformed the Beautiful Game*. Bold Type Books. Page 3

<sup>15</sup> Jacobs, B. (2004). *The Dick Kerr Ladies*. Robinson. Page 48

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Page 51 - 52

<sup>17</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Page 191

“On the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1921, women’s football was banned from FA affiliated grounds with the primary reasons outlined suggesting that the game could be harmful to female participants and that there were many questions regarding where the funds from charity games were actually going”.<sup>18</sup> This ban on female football lasted fifty years, not being lifted until 1971.<sup>19</sup> In 1969 however, the WFA (Women’s Football Association) was formed with 44 member clubs.<sup>20</sup> The WFA were one of the main catalysts of the progression of female football. Due to a growth of women’s football in the 1960s, there was a significant increase in the number of teams and therefore in the entry of competitions.<sup>21</sup> Formal leagues and tournaments were then established, which included “the Deal International Tournament from 1967 which directly led to the creation” of the WFA.<sup>22</sup> Individuals like Arthur Hobbs and Patricia Gregory “pioneered summer football for women more than 40 years before the FA Women’s Super League (WSL)”.<sup>23</sup> Therefore the legacy of female football may not have been there without the direct support of the WFA. However, one aspect that is most surprising for the WFA, since they were great supporters of the sport, was their disagreement over the 1971 Second unofficial World Cup entry.

Interestingly as a by product of the 1966 men’s World Cup being hosted and won by England, there was also a boost in the “participation and spectatorship for the women’s game”.<sup>24</sup> This would suggest that the 1971 second unofficial World Cup would have been a great opportunity for an English women’s team to be involved in a competition abroad. However, as this dissertation aims to explain, according to officials such as Patricia Gregory this was not the right time for the WFA as they were still new and it was against the FA’s wishes.<sup>25</sup> The players and manager Harry Batt who travelled over to Mexico under the title of England, recorded some fantastical statistics playing for crowds of 90,000, but on their return were handed suspensions and Batt himself banned for life.<sup>26</sup> The debate regarding who was in the right

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<sup>18</sup> Byrne, H, Carrier, J, James, G & Skillen, F. (2022) *‘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*. *Sport in History*, 42:1, 49-75, DOI: 10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415. Page 49

<sup>19</sup> The FA. (2023). THE STORY OF WOMEN’S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers>

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Skillen, F., Byrne, H., Carrier, J., & James, G. (2022). *‘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*. *Sport in History*, 42(1), 49-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415> Page 54

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Page 54

<sup>23</sup> Women’s Football Archive. *The Deal International Tournament*. Women’s Football Archive. <https://womensfootballarchive.org/2014/06/11/the-deal-international-tournament/>

<sup>24</sup> Dunn, C. (2016;2015;). *Football and the Women’s World Cup: Organisation, media and fandom* (1st 2016. ed.). Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137567338> Page 9

<sup>25</sup> P. Gregory, interview, December 13, 2022. 00:21:51

<sup>26</sup> The FA. *LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HERITAGE OF WOMEN’S FOOTBALL IN MILTON KEYNES*. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/competitions/uefa-womens-euro-2022/heritage/milton-keynes-heritage>



about this tournament is at the centre of this research. Furthermore, ascertaining the catalyst for the development of the women's game requires acknowledgement of both the founding of the WFA and the first involvement of English women's football through their participation in the second unofficial Women's World Cup in 1971.

Moreover, the legacy of both the WFA and the 1971 tournament needs to be considered. The WFA setting up the original WSL and the first Women's FA cup, meant that they had a long lasting impact on the development of the opportunities for competition in the women's game.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the 1971 squad brought about a new found opportunity for international play that may not have been made possible without their brave venture to Mexico.<sup>28</sup> Aside from both of them trailblazers in the 1970s, there has also been many external factors that have sped up or slowed down the growth of women's football which also need to be considered. What is irrefutable, is the very obvious impact the Women's Euro in 2022 has had on the women's game in England. Within a very short period of time, women's football has been completely transformed by the feat achieved by the Lionesses squad from that tournament. They have allowed greater opportunities for the domestic teams to play in men's stadiums, appear on television much more widely and find new role models for young upcoming girls in the sport.<sup>29</sup> As a direct result of the mass increase in popularity, the Women's World Cup in 2023 has also had all the games shown on mainstream television for the first time ever. The question remains, how sustainable is this for the future of the women's game?

To answer these questions this dissertation will focus on the foundations of the WFA and their impact on women's football, before the sport was handed solely back to the FA. It will also analyse Harry and June Batt's tournaments entries, specifically identifying their efforts as both a positive and potential negative to women's football, according to the politics of the time. Another aspect that is going to be investigated is the effects aside from just the legacies of the WFA and the Batt's tournaments. These external influences help to demonstrate why women's football is one of the fastest growing sports in the world today and that is what this dissertation is going to explain.

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<sup>27</sup> Women's Football Archive. *The Deal International Tournament*. Women's Football Archive. <https://womensfootballarchive.org/2014/06/11/the-deal-international-tournament/>

<sup>28</sup> Malone, R. *The hidden history of women's football in England*. Sports Gazette. <https://sportsgazette.co.uk/the-hidden-history-of-womens-football-in-england/>

<sup>29</sup> Ingham, A. (2022). *From grassroots to WSL: more women's football teams are playing in men's stadiums*. SWLondoner. <https://www.swlondoner.co.uk/sport/25112022-from-grassroots-to-wsl-more-womens-football-teams-are-playing-in-mens-stadiums>

## Literature review

The long-lasting struggle for women's representation in sports and through media outlets is intrinsically "intertwined with gendered power dynamics in sports", which have historically been formed upon hegemonic masculinity ideals.<sup>30</sup> In more basic forms this means that, typically women's history, even in sport, has been written by men and constantly compared to men's sport. 2022 was a turning point in the female footballing world due to the Women's Euro tournament and especially the final where much of the world watched the showdown between England and Germany.<sup>31</sup> There is evidence of this turning point, due to it being the most-watched women's football game on UK television of all-time and was the most-watched programme in 2022 at the time.<sup>32</sup> Despite a growing literature emerging regarding the progressive momentum of women's football in the twenty-first century, there remains a forgotten fifty years. The early history is quite extensive with the Dick Kerr Ladies being one of the most well-known teams of female football and their story and legacy has been widely researched. In 1921, the FA minute book "stated that 'the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged'".<sup>33</sup> This ban was in place for fifty years, stopping females from being able to play on FA grounds, through clubs and with referees.<sup>34</sup> The aim with this dissertation, however, is to open up stories of the players who are underrepresented in the history of women's football. In particular, the team and players in the 1971 Second unofficial World Cup and the women surrounding the foundation of the Women's Football Association (WFA) who together pioneered the sport and about whom very little has been written, will be my focus.

To date much of the work on women's football has been produced by men. Tim Tate, for example, has written about female football within his glittering career. On his website he describes himself as "best-selling author, multiple award-winning documentary filmmaker and investigative journalist".<sup>35</sup> His website demonstrates that he has been privileged to have been commissioned both in Britain and internationally to write books.<sup>36</sup> This raises the question as to whether Tate is the most appropriate for researching this topic as he covers many different

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<sup>30</sup> Crawford, M. (2022). *Speaking up and speaking out: Collective voice in Women's sports media. Communication and Sport*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795221131794>

<sup>31</sup> BBC. (2022). *Record-breaking Women's Euro 2022 on the BBC*. Media Centre. <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2022/record-breaking-womens-euro-2022-bbc>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> National Football Museum. *QUITE UNSUITABLE FOR FEMALES PODCAST*. National Football Museum. <https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/quite-unsuitable/>

<sup>34</sup> Bolton, S & Skillen, F. (2021). *1921 WHEN FOOTBALL BANNED WOMEN*. Playing Pasts. <https://www.playingpasts.co.uk/articles/football/1921-when-football-banned-women/>

<sup>35</sup> Tate, T. *TIM TATE AUTHOR, FILM-MAKER & INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST*. Tim Tate. <https://timtate.co.uk/>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

themes and genres depending on commissions and demographics. Although he is not the only author to write on the subject of female football his research around the Dick Kerr Ladies in his book '*Girls with Balls – The Secret History of Women's Football*', has been particularly prominent. Tate's book has been used in articles to discuss the Dick Kerr's such as that in the Daily Mail to introduce the book and the topic to readers.<sup>37</sup> Despite the WSL being formed at the time in 2011, the book was not written until 2013 and about a team almost a century earlier.<sup>38</sup> The Dick Kerr ladies have become a massive part of the history of female football and yet as with Tate it seems that much of the literature written about them, has been traditionally conducted by men. Although woman's history being presented by men is a common occurrence, female perspective is key to presenting woman's past as they can provide relation and understanding in greater ability than men who might not have the same experiences. In recent year a more modern and relevant body of research surrounding the past and present of women's football has been written mainly by females. There has been a sharp rise in the number of female writers on football. As an observation alone that does not mean a lot, but in relation to the research undertaken and the methodologies used to collate it there is a marked difference. In particular, many have worked through the means of interviews and material culture, clearly suggesting a divide in masculine versus feminine priorities in methodology. For example, the key difference between Tim Tate's book and Jean Williams' work *The History of women's football*, is that Williams takes her research a step further and includes interviews with players. Obviously, the players of the Dick Kerr's might be no longer with us, but there are other ways to open up research which is what this piece of research also intends to do. This will entail looking at the statistics and information available from historians and utilising the Lily Parr exhibit at the National Football Museum, rather than relying on romanticised views of the Dick Kerr's from players who were not around at the time they were playing. Similarly, the intention of this research surrounding the players of 1971, is to interview those who knew or watched the players of the unofficial England team. Although the Dick Kerr Ladies are an absolute key part of female sporting history, they are not the main focus of this dissertation and that is part of the struggles in terms of literature and historiographical research, as the team are the dominant focus of much literature surrounding female football.

Much of the more recent research surrounds the WFA and formations of new female teams in the years after the fifty-year ban. Much of this research has been explored by the means of

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<sup>37</sup> Shilling, J. (2013). *The beauties who bent it like Becks*. Daily Mail.  
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-2400167/The-beauties-bent-like-Becks-GIRLS-WITH-BALLS-THE-SECRET-HISTORY-OF-WOMENS-FOOTBALL-BY-TIME-TATE.html>

<sup>38</sup> The FA. *How the 2011 FA WSL season was won*. Women's Leagues and Competitions.  
<https://womenscompetitions.thefa.com/en/Article/How-the-2011-FA-WSL-season-was-won-08042020>

journal articles. For example, *Sport in History* has been a key source as it prides itself on publishing “high quality historical research on sport, combining a wide range of topics and approaches, attracting a mix of leading historians and younger scholars”.<sup>39</sup> One article written by Fiona Skillen and Carol A. Osborne, argues that nowadays women’s involvement in multiple sporting activities have been more prominent due to a shift in societal matters, including the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>40</sup> They argue that even more now than previously thought the wide coverage of female sport across the media has allowed record breaking figures of viewers and statistics to be reached.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, this is very clearly demonstrated within the amount of knowledge the general public now has been exposed to in terms of the history of female football due to the Lionesses’ success in 2022 and 2023. A number of journal articles additionally use oral histories in order to evidence their argument. This allows for even more opportunities to see different or similar perspectives on the WFA or female football as a whole through personal and first-hand accounts. An example of this is in Williams’ article focusing on the Manchester Corinthians, which “uses oral history to reflect what the players felt about playing for the club” but “not all of the players are represented due to constraints of space, but this is an introduction to a larger ongoing project to reclaim the teams’ history”.<sup>42</sup> Personally this statement is clear, *Sports in History* has allowed researchers and writers to “reclaim” the history of players that are yet to be told.<sup>43</sup>

Carrie Dunn in her book *‘Unsuitable for Females: The Rise of the Lionesses and Women’s Football in England*, discusses the 1971 unofficial tournament in a 10-page section about “The Forgotten”.<sup>44</sup> Naturally the title of the book demonstrates that Dunn’s aim was to cover a wide area of history with her research, which would explain why her focus was not primarily on the Second unofficial World Cup in 1971. However, her techniques of using interviews and quoting from players such as Leah Caleb, Gill Sayell and Chris Lockwood, gives her a stronger position to analyse the competition and discuss how they should get that recognition they deserve.<sup>45</sup> The argument made by Dunn could have been more effective by commenting on the impact the 1971 squad has had today. Jean Williams’ book *The history of women’s football*

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<sup>39</sup> Taylor & Francis Online. *Sport in History Aims and scope*. Taylor & Francis Online.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rsih20>

<sup>40</sup> Osborne, C. A., & Skillen, F. (2020). *Women in sports history: The more things change, the more they stay the same?* *Sport in History*, 40(4), 411-433. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2020.1835707> Page 411

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* Page 418

<sup>42</sup> Williams, J. (2019). *‘we’re the lassies from Lancashire’: Manchester Corinthians ladies FC and the use of overseas tours to defy the FA ban on women’s football*. *Sport in History*, 39(4), 395-417.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1678068> Page 395

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* Page 395

<sup>44</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *‘Unsuitable for Females’: The Rise of the Lionesses and Women’s Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 61

<sup>45</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *‘Unsuitable for Females’: The Rise of the Lionesses and Women’s Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 62 & 68

describes the 1971 second unofficial World Cup under the Chapter title “Harry Batt’s Touring Teams 1968-1972”.<sup>46</sup> The strength that Williams has on discussing Batt in more depth gives a more rounded understanding of his decision to go to Mexico, which Dunn lacks. Again it must be considered that this book is an account of the history of women’s football so also covers a wide spectrum of history aside from the second unofficial World Cup. In a similar way to Dunn’s book however, Williams prides herself on the strong use of oral interviews to uncover the individual experiences of players from this tournament, but unlike Dunn she does it with greater success. Williams manages to quote a range of players in greater depth. For example, considerable space is given to Leah Caleb, including an image of the mascot “Xochitl”, which she discusses (Appendix 4).<sup>47</sup> Similar to what this dissertation hopes to achieve, the use of material culture in combination with oral interviews is a way of demonstrating that oral recollections can be a useful method in research, as demonstrated here. Material culture has also had a huge influence on the way in which the history of women’s football has been displayed. By secondary sources drawing from primary oral interviews and material culture, in this instance it has helped to understand the international tournaments that Batt attended from multiple sources and personal experiences. This has brought more memory from players themselves discussing objects from their history and impacted the way in which the tournaments are viewed by those involved and the wider audience due to having further evidence in the form of material culture. Valerie Janesick describes her own definition of Oral history as “the collection of stories and reminiscences of a person or persons who have first-hand knowledge of any number of experiences.”<sup>48</sup> Both Dunn and Williams have mastered this and utilised oral histories. Curiously, Williams and Dunn are both very different researchers. Dunn describes herself as a “Freelance Sports Writer & Journalist” on her website.<sup>49</sup> Williams on the other hand is introduced as “the leading global scholar of women’s football”.<sup>50</sup> Similar to Tate, the main issues with Dunn and Williams are that neither are academic historians and therefore may lose focus on analysis and concentrate more on the story they are telling. However the techniques and the historical narratives that Dunn and Williams have portrayed regarding the 1971 second unofficial World Cup, have been huge influences to this piece of research. Dunn argues that the players in the 1971 squad had no idea how much uproar “they would cause simply by playing football”.<sup>51</sup> Dunn relies heavily on

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<sup>46</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 96

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* Pages 114 - 115

<sup>48</sup> Janesick, V. J. (2010). *Oral history for the qualitative researcher: Choreographing the story*. Guilford Press. Page 2

<sup>49</sup> Dunn, C. *CARRIE DUNN*. CARRIE DUNN. <https://www.carriedunn.net/>

<sup>50</sup> Forum for Scholars and Publics at Duke University. (2018). *JEAN WILLIAMS*. Forum for Scholars and Publics at Duke University. <https://fsp.duke.edu/speakers/jean-williams/>

<sup>51</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *'Unsuitable for Females': The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 61

the testimonies of the squad themselves, to portray the view that Batt took the necessary precautions and did what was right within the rules of the FA when attending Mexico.<sup>52</sup> Although this is partly true, it does lack the understanding of the WFA's perspective as to why they felt they had to take action so therefore is not completely reliable. Williams however, manages to convey both the understanding of the WFA and the 1971 perspectives. Her use of the oral memories of the 1971 players combined with the decisions made by the WFA has meant a much more rounded and successful piece of research. Williams still led to the favourable conclusion that the 1971 squad are "pioneers" that faced injustice and should have been recognised a lot sooner than 50 years on.<sup>53</sup>

Another area of research that had to be considered is what the literature about male football offers to the understanding of the women's game. Mainly the comparative research that looks at male and female football players surrounds the medical impacts of the game, in terms of long-term injury or future repercussions of the game such as concussions leading to dementia.<sup>54</sup> Similar to that, many of the journal articles researched also compare the anatomy of both male and female sporting players, specifically in regards to injuries. For example, in America the "National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) soccer" suggests that the number of severe injuries in football was higher in women than in men.<sup>55</sup> Research conducted on behalf of the NCAA soccer, has revealed no sex differences in injury occurrence, despite earlier studies separately reporting data on male and female players which showed a higher recorded amount of match injuries in men and a higher recorded amount of training injuries in women.<sup>56</sup> Another interesting conclusion drawn from literature surrounding male football is that 1966 was a peak year for both men and women playing and supporting the sport. According to Chisari, 1966 was not only the first year to broadcast a sport such as football, but in sport in general, to an audience wider than just men. It drew much attention towards a large number of women from the stands and from the comfort of their own homes.<sup>57</sup> Chisari continues to suggest that the 1966 World Cup victory shown on mainstream Television, was "the beginning of the 'football stars' age" and "of the 'tabloid heroes' era" as footballers

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<sup>52</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). 'Unsuitable for Females': The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England. *Birlinn General*. Page 62 - 63

<sup>53</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 138

<sup>54</sup> Ling, H., Morris, H. R., Neal, J. W., Lees, A. J., Hardy, J., Holton, J. L., Revesz, T., & Williams, D. D. R. (2017). *Mixed pathologies including chronic traumatic encephalopathy account for dementia in retired association football (soccer) players*. *Acta Neuropathologica*, 133(3), 337-352. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00401-017-1680-3> Page 337

<sup>55</sup> Larruskain, J., Lekue, J. A., Diaz, N., Odriozola, A., & Gil, S. M. (2018). *A comparison of injuries in elite male and female football players: A five-season prospective study*. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 28(1), 237-245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sms.12860> Page 237

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*. Page 241

<sup>57</sup> Chisari, F. (2004). *'shouting housewives!' the 1966 World Cup and British television*. *Sport in History*, 24(1), 94-108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460260409414737> Page 108

personal lives were coming more to the forefront than ever before.<sup>58</sup> The study of traditionally male sporting impacts such as the World Cup of 1966 and injuries to male players now being compared to women has opened up many paths to look into. Undoubtedly the male players and game has given many female players role models to look up to and more recently they have become the role models for the new generations today.<sup>59</sup>

This research brings to light the history of the rebirth of women's football, at the beginning and after the lifting of the ban. From more female perspectives and understanding of the women's game, it will open up a new understanding on women's football through the focus on the 1971 unofficial Women's World Cup specifically. The legacy it has left has come to the forefront much more recently. Despite its long wait, women's football today has helped to demonstrate who young girls today have to be thankful to so that they can play football today. Due to the players being handed bans and not all going back into football afterwards, has led to their story largely being untold for many years. The WFA stamped out much reference to the squad, especially by forming the first official England squad a year later. In order to reach the full extent of the legacies left by the 1971 squad the main methodologies that will be drawn from are: oral interviews, primary materials and secondary literature sources by other historians.

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<sup>58</sup> Chisari, F. (2004). 'shouting housewives!' the 1966 World Cup and British television. *Sport in History*, 24(1), 94-108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460260409414737>. Page 106

<sup>59</sup> Smith, F. (2022). *Ellen White: 'It is a real privilege being a role model'*. England Football. <https://www.Englandfootball.com/articles/2022/Feb/04/ellen-white-growth-womens-football-role-model-20220204>

## Methodology

Within this research there has been three main methodologies used. Conducting oral interviews has been the main form of research, by interviewing past players and staff involved in the WFA; the players from more recent times; and the players from the 1971 squad. Another method of research that has been used has been the study of material culture and the pictures that have been used as a memory cue. Furthermore, a very important research method has been the more traditional use of primary material in the form of newspaper articles, minute books and minute documents, to see the specific attitudes and decisions of the time. The final source of research has been previous literature conducted by sports historians, sports journalists and many feminist sociologists. The reason as to why oral interviews were chosen was down to the fact that women have been often unwritten out of history.<sup>60</sup> Historian Bettany Hughes has argued that “women have always been 50% of the population, but only occupy around 0.5% of recorded history”.<sup>61</sup> As a consequence of Hughes comments, it is vitally important that research into the heroines of women’s football have their opportunity to put their own stories across to the new generations and on behalf of their own and previous generations who were unable to do so.

Primary and secondary data is being compared throughout this dissertation. Although primary data can offer some risk because it is new, it is the main piece of this research.<sup>62</sup> Specifically the primary data that has been collated is as mentioned through the use of oral interviews, this is a strong use of research to uncover particular and in-depth views and it can be “helpful in the exploratory stages of research to elicit views, identify variables, important factors as a method of structuring further research”.<sup>63</sup> Quantitative and qualitative data has also been used throughout this research. It has offered evidence through the form of statistics of matches and fan views of the sport, which has allowed comparison from WFA ruling versus post WFA match control, giving much insight to the rapid improvements of the women’s game. Additionally, the material acquired from oral interviews has allowed a direct comparison to material culture to be analysed.

Many interviews have been conducted, these include: one of the founding members of the WFA and ex-players of the sport; those who played for England after the 1971 Second

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<sup>60</sup> English Heritage. (2016). *WHY WERE WOMEN WRITTEN OUT OF HISTORY? AN INTERVIEW WITH BETTANY HUGHES*. English Heritage. <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/inspire-me/blog/blog-posts/why-were-women-written-out-of-history-an-interview-with-bettany-hughes/>

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Gray, C., & Malins, J. (2004;2007;2016;2013;). *Visualizing research: A guide to the research process in art and design*. Ashgate. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315547923> Page 98 - 99

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*



unofficial World Cup and players from the 1971 squad. Due to “oral history interviews focus on respecting the interviewee’s experience, and empowering them to tell their story on their own terms without fear of being judged”, it has been the most important part to consider whilst interviewing these women as many of them have faced judgement and have been silenced for many years.<sup>64</sup> The reaction to asking ex-players to take part has been immense, they have all been very open and keen to be involved in getting their experiences across. In one interview Liz Deighan stated that she did not believe that the women in her era who played for England have got a great deal of recognition.<sup>65</sup> In another interview Kerry Davis echoed this idea of speaking about the past for those who have been ignored and left behind, emphasising how important it was to her to do interviews in order to give her generation some recognition.<sup>66</sup> The general feeling of being forgotten and of being missing from the history books of women’s football is felt by many of those involved with the WFA and is why they have been focused on within this dissertation. On the other side of the WFA are those players who attended the second unofficial World Cup in 1971 who faced further struggles as they were banned from playing for many months upon their return by the WFA.<sup>67</sup> Their story and experience is just as important in uncovering what kind of impact the WFA had in the long run. A point that has to be considered is that the WFA had more control over what happened to the 1971 squad at the time, but now the public are much more aware of the stories of the 1971 second unofficial World Cup. This is further backed up by Leah Caleb, Chris Lockwood and Gill Sayell in their interview discussing how they were invited to speak to the current Lionesses about their story whereas the official England team from 1972 had not been invited.<sup>68</sup>

Each member that was interviewed was either part of the WFA or a player during the WFA, they all signed a consent form and allowed use of their words in this research piece. Collective memory work focusing on childhood can analyse and aid understanding of topics such as engagement “with sport, physical activity, exercise, or leisure during their childhood”.<sup>69</sup> Part of the focus of the interviews was to engage with the collective memory of many of the players to try and form the picture of what happened in Mexico and the rest of their lives. Similar to female football today, much of the information known of the 1971 competition is through visual

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<sup>64</sup> Dalton, S. (2017). *What are oral histories and why are they important?* Glasgow Women's Library. <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/2017/08/09/what-are-oral-histories-and-why-are-they-important/>

<sup>65</sup> L. Deighan, ‘Liz Deighan interview’. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:32:34

<sup>66</sup> K. Davis, interview, March 6, 2023. 00:31:00

<sup>67</sup> BBC. (2019). *Women’s World Cup: 1971 ‘lost lionesses’ squad tracked down after 48 years*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/48771268>

<sup>68</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:31:00

<sup>69</sup> Clift, B. C, Francombe-Webb, J. & Merchant, S. (2023) *Remembering learning to play: reworking gendered memories of sport, physical activity, and movement, Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, DOI: 10.1080/2159676X.2022.2161609 Page 13

culture and representation in the media and social life seen in everyday life.<sup>70</sup> Through the means of advertising, television, films and photographs the sporting world is seen practically all the time now and the growth of female football has to give credit to the means of visual culture as a way of getting further public attention.<sup>71</sup> Gill Sayell, Chris Lockwood and Leah Caleb have said that the current England squad wanted to meet and hear their story of 1971 pushing their story further into the public eye due to the current Lioness squad being huge role models for young upcoming players.<sup>72</sup> Not only does it make this squad and the stories of the history of women's football post the ban in 1970 important, but the success of the Lionesses has encouraged more interest in the heroines involved because of where women's football is today. This is why it is such a current but under researched area of sporting history that is overdue recognition.

There are many benefits of using material culture in order to enhance understanding. According to Tilley, there have been many studies into material culture which over the past twenty years "have undergone a profound transformation".<sup>73</sup> This means that the analysis of material culture is "among the most dynamic and wide-ranging areas of contemporary scholarship in the human sciences" today.<sup>74</sup> Due to its contemporary acceptance and how well it fits in with this topic of female footballing history, material culture is the other main methodology here. In much of the "archaeology of historical periods", it has been hypothesized that written texts provide a more likely representation of events and "original meanings" than other methods do.<sup>75</sup> Documents such as the WFA minutes, memorabilia from the 1971 squad and newspaper articles from the time will be richly used to compare with the perspectives of those who were directly involved in the footballing world of that time. Since it has been discussed that primary sources are a stronger piece of evidence than other aspects, material culture will shine through in the discussion to enhance the oral recollections.<sup>76</sup> Literature on women's football, tends to include images of material culture to reinforce the ideas of progression in the sport. In Suzanne Wrack's book, she shows a series of photographs of different events and objects, one of those images is from the opening ceremony of the match

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<sup>70</sup> Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual materials* (4th edition.). SAGE. Page 4

<sup>71</sup> Gemmel, M. (2021). *Art Theory: Visual Culture*. Arts Help. <https://www.artshelp.com/art-theory-visual-culture/>

<sup>72</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:35:18

<sup>73</sup> Tilley, C. Y. (2006). *Handbook of material culture*. SAGE. Page 1

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* Page 1

<sup>75</sup> Goodwin, J. (2012). *SAGE Biographical Research* (SAGE Library of Research Methods). SAGE Publications Ltd. Page 172

<sup>76</sup> JJ Heritage. *Developing Contemporary Collections in Museums and Archives: the unofficial Women's World Cup Mexico 1971*. JJ Heritage. <https://jjheritage.com/developing-contemporary-collections-in-museums-and-archives-the-unofficial-womens-world-cup-mexico-1971/>

between Denmark and Mexico in 1970.<sup>77</sup> Edwards suggests that photographs are a “popular historicism...intended to preserve and perform a perception of the historical past”.<sup>78</sup> This suggests that photographic evidence can instil the memory of past events and demonstrate the social and cultural impact it has as an historical object and also shapes the understanding of the event in a particular way. The problem for historians is whether, and to what extent, these pictures can be trusted.<sup>79</sup>

Material culture surrounding the second unofficial World Cup in 1971 was much more prominent in Mexico, the host country, than in competing countries such as England, meaning that very little was portrayed in England, whereas magazines and newspapers in Mexico were much more prominent in promoting the tournament and still exist. Due to having the material culture available to physically view, by visiting the National Football Archives in Preston, this has been a key part of this research as it has given more realism to the narratives that have been told as well as providing further evidence to their arguments.<sup>80</sup> A lot of the images and writing surrounding the 1971 competition were published in magazines such as *Impacto* (Appendix 2 figure 3), *Balón* (Appendix 2 figure 1) and *Cine Mundial* (Appendix 2 figure 2). However, each magazine had a different method of displaying the atmosphere surrounding the tournament. For example, in one of *Cine Mundial* editions, there is a very clear connotations of sexualising the female footballers involved with the 1971 competition as on the front page in particular there is a woman topless with a football covering her, seen in Appendix 2 figure 2.<sup>81</sup> In comparison to the magazine company *Impacto* where their magazine articles displayed the Second unofficial World Cup quite seriously and respectfully (seen in Appendix 2 figure 3), there is a stark difference in the two versions.<sup>82</sup> At this time in England, the only discussion about the tournament in Mexico was through newspapers. The Daily Mirror in particular published articles regarding the tournament with the majority of them being negative, using the WFA’s views to their advantage.<sup>83</sup> The differences in how the media represented this tournament is an important element to consider as it explains to what extent

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<sup>77</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Pages 122 - 123

<sup>78</sup> EDWARDS, E. (2009). *PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE MATERIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PAST: Photography and historical interpretation*. *History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History*, 48(4), 130-150. Page 131

<sup>79</sup> Burke, P. (2001). *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*. reaktion books. Page 21

<sup>80</sup> JJ Heritage. *Developing Contemporary Collections in Museums and Archives: the unofficial Women's World Cup Mexico 1971*. JJ Heritage. <https://jjheritage.com/developing-contemporary-collections-in-museums-and-archives-the-unofficial-womens-world-cup-mexico-1971/>

<sup>81</sup> Cine Mundial. (1971, August 26). Serie con Alejandra del Moral. *Cine Mundial*, (6,667), 1-11. National Football Museum archive, Deepdale Preston. PRSFM. 2017.4033.

<sup>82</sup> Llegro, R. H. (1971, September 15). *Las Danesas, Campeonas!* *Impacto*, (1124), 30-35. National Football Museum archive, Deepdale Preston. PRSFM. 2019.58.

<sup>83</sup> Daily Mirror. (1971, September 2). *Mexico disgrace gulp sorry....* Daily Mirror. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000560/19710902/171/0023>

magazines specify their content to their target market rather than being objective.<sup>84</sup> As a history dissertation, it will combine the side of material culture with theory and personal narratives, in order to uncover what happened in the years 1969 to 1971, when the WFA were overseeing the growth of women's football and what impact it has had on future generations of the sport.

By using the British newspaper Archives to get access to newspaper articles of history of women's game during the ban on women's football, the formation of the WFA and the media representation of the 1971 tournament in Mexico has been great aid to this piece of research. Using primary sources such as newspaper articles has provided huge opportunity to understand the political personalities of the sport and the view pushed onto society. They have also aided the oral interview stories by providing further evidence to back up their recollection of the time. Newspaper archives in the form of digitised sources have now made it easier for global audiences to gain greater access and it protects the archives themselves.<sup>85</sup> The British Library has also provided access to the WFA meeting minutes and correspondence between the WFA's Secretary's and the teams that were part of the WFA committee. Going to the British Library and gaining the experience within the archive itself has added confidence and further understanding of the importance of a dissertation such as this due to the efforts of those involved in the relaunch of women's football. These minutes and correspondence were used extensively to enhance understanding of the early days of the WFA (See chapter 1).

The main conjecture of this methodology is that it is impossible to uncover the aim of this dissertation solely based on what has been written about the 1971 second unofficial World Cup and the role the WFA played in this. By incorporating material culture and oral histories, there will be more opportunities to portray the events of 1971 and also the future of women's football under the WFA from multiple perspectives. Due to some of the historic literature being influenced using oral histories, to build up their own arguments, this is the best route to take. The research being undertaken however presents new ideas to a previously unsaturated area of research and history. Unlike other aspects of women's footballing history, the forgotten years of the sport between the gradual lifting of the 50-year ban and the end of the WFA have been very under researched. Bearing in mind there are lots of materials available to demonstrate the mass growth and support it contained for the future of woman's football that we see today; this is a fruitful area. To intrinsically link the WFA and the 1971 second unofficial

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<sup>84</sup> McKay, J. (2019;2018;). *The magazines handbook* (Fourth ed.). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203143278>. Page 2

<sup>85</sup> The National Archives. *Benefits of digitisation*. The National Archives. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/commercial-opportunities/digitisation-services/benefits-of-digitisation/>

World Cup through the use of many different materials and sources will leave room for the future history of women's football to continue to be told.

Chapter 1 is going to look into the WFA, focusing on its aims and how successful they were in the choices they made, utilising much primary and secondary material. The WFA have been a key focus due to their redevelopment of women's football and the pressures that come along with that. Chapter 2 delves into the understanding of the 1971 squad at the second unofficial Women's World Cup. The 1971 tournament has been highlighted because it is a very underrepresented but important part of women's footballing history. This World Cup has often been disregarded and represented in solely negative ways and so by the means of oral histories and material culture has been reconsidered in this dissertation. Chapter 3 is a reflection of other external factors aside from the first two chapters. Using much secondary quantitative material chapter 3 is important to this dissertation as it explains why there has been slow progress in the sport, but also brings to light both efforts of the WFA and the 1971 tournament.

## Chapter 1: The home team – The perspectives of the WFA

This chapter *home team* examines the formation of the WFA and the battles which they faced during their foundation and the lifting of the ban on women's football. From the beginning of 1969, pressure was being exerted on the FA to rescind its ban.<sup>86</sup> In the same year, 44 clubs attended the inaugural meeting of the WFA.<sup>87</sup> Within these 44 clubs were Chiltern Valley, Manchester Corinthians, and White Ribbon.<sup>88</sup> The FA decided that it would recognise the WFA "as the sole governing body of women's football in this country at the present time".<sup>89</sup> The WFA's view of the 1971 tournament is hugely negative due to Patricia Gregory and Arthur Hobbs opinion, that by the team entering the second unofficial World Cup it went against the rules set by the FA.<sup>90</sup> Some of the main reasons as to why the WFA strongly believed they were in the right were because the FA said there could be no England squad in 1971, it was too soon for the WFA to have a team in the tournament as they were still new and there were still ongoing disputes surrounding the ban, particularly concerns whether it would stay lifted or not if the 1971 squad went ahead. On the other hand, some believe the action taken by the WFA was too harsh, for the so-called crime they committed with their attendance at Mexico. Another discussion arises as to whether Harry Batt was in the wrong for taking Chiltern Valley to Mexico despite the fact, he had done it before with another group of girls to the first unofficial Women's World Cup in 1970 held in Italy.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, another previous England representative in 1969, Sue Lopez, who had been part of Batt's touring teams, declined the chance to play in Mexico 1971 and was subsequently welcomed into the WFA's England squad years later.<sup>92</sup> The main question comes to mind as to whether the WFA's choice of punishment hindered the growth of Women's football or allowed them to get to the broader goals which they were trying to achieve. This chapter will consider these questions.

Firstly, the WFA felt that the attendance of the 'England' team in Mexico 1971 was going to impact their long-term goals. The main aim of the WFA was to sustain a long growth and influence many upcoming female players, giving them the chance for the first time in 50 years

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<sup>86</sup> Skillen, F., Byrne, H., Carrier, J., & James, G. (2022). *'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*. *Sport in History*, 42(1), 49-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415> Page 54

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* Page 54

<sup>88</sup> Word press. *Founder Clubs - History of the Women's Football Association*. Word press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/early-years/founder-clubs/>

<sup>89</sup> WordPress. *Early Years - History of the Women's Football Association*. WordPress. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/early-years/>

<sup>90</sup> Malone, R. *The hidden history of women's football in England*. Sports Gazette. <https://sportsgazette.co.uk/the-hidden-history-of-womens-football-in-england/>

<sup>91</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 51

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* Pages 61 - 62

to be able to play the beautiful game.<sup>93</sup> Patricia Gregory was the honorary assistant secretary, honorary secretary and eventually an honorary life Vice President for the WFA.<sup>94</sup> Gregory has often spoken of her time at the WFA and suggests her story and the story of her fellow members needs to be more widely spread.<sup>95</sup> She recalls how she formed her first team in 1967, writing to the local paper where she discovered that there was a ban on women's football, introducing this problem and the opportunity to provide its solution.<sup>96</sup> In relation to the 1971 tournament and Harry Batt's action, Gregory said "we just had to make sure that we were protecting what we were trying to establish", referring to the long-term aims of the WFA.<sup>97</sup> Alongside Gregory and other club owners, Arthur Hobbs was the one of the founders of the WFA.<sup>98</sup> The carpenter from Kent, set up a tournament for women's teams in 1967 which eventually ended up with 32 teams showing interest in entering in 1968.<sup>99</sup> The following year Hobbs' tournament ended up with a staggering 47 teams competing, this brought about the discussion of setting up a governing body called 'The Ladies Football Association of Great Britain' with the participants of this tournament.<sup>100</sup> Gregory remarked how she believed that Arthur Hobbs was the "driving force" behind the formation of the WFA, and this seems to be further evidenced by the starting point of the WFA in the form of the 'The Ladies Football Association of Great Britain'.<sup>101</sup>

In 1969, Hobbs wrote to clubs inviting them to the inaugural meeting of the Ladies Football Association of Great Britain.<sup>102</sup> Within this letter he references the minutes of many meetings with parliament discussing the subject of women's football. He specifically mentions the response that he received from Mr. G.A. McPartlin, the Deputy director of The Sports Council London, who suggested that there was "nothing to stop the plans from being successful in getting the association recognised as the National Body of Ladies football."<sup>103</sup> This joint alliance between Gregory and Hobbs helped to put the pressure on the FA to encourage a change to

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<sup>93</sup> Word Press. *Early Years – History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/early-years/>

<sup>94</sup> Word Press. *Personalities from the 1960s/70s - History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/wfa-development/personalities-60s-70s/>

<sup>95</sup> National Football Museum. (2023, March 13). Team talk with... Patricia Gregory [Crossing the Line [Video]]. National Football Museum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWuumpfZ080>

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:12:34

<sup>98</sup> Word Press. *Early Years – History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/early-years/>

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:02:40

<sup>102</sup> A. Hobbs. (1969, August 11). Letter from Arthur Hobbs to Brenda in The Ladies Association of Great Britain minutes. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/1), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>103</sup> A. Hobbs. (1969, August 11). *Letter from Arthur Hobbs to Brenda in The Ladies Association of Great Britain minutes*. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/1), London, United Kingdom.

the way in which they approached women's football.<sup>104</sup> The question that comes to mind is to whether or not the ban would have been lifted without the foundations of the WFA and the support from other clubs. As a self-organised and self-funded group, the impact of the team from 1971, may have been deemed as threatening as it moved too far away from the organised and structured nature the WFA was more used to. After the end of the 1971 tournament and the repercussions that were handed out to the squad involved, the WFA felt as though they were still in control of their own movement and could influence the future of the game. Although they did this by acting in a similar way to the men who were only now 'allowing' them to play.

A second point as to why the WFA may have been acting in the correct manner to protect themselves, was in regards to ensuring they could appear as a sustained independent body from the FA. In a meeting from December 1970, the starting discussion referred to the way the WFA were going to pool fares, with a specific section regarding the difference between car and train travel.<sup>105</sup> Of course this was mainly to make it more fair for each member, but it does demonstrate how strict the WFA were with keeping costs down and how precise they were. Clearly this was one way in which the WFA's could demonstrate to the FA how organised they were. The FA had previously removed women's football because of their so called belief that it was unsuitable for females.<sup>106</sup> However, due to the growing popularity and mass amounts of money raised because of the Dick Kerr ladies, the FA got frustrated with this and had to ban the women's game.<sup>107</sup> By the FA already demonstrating their power over women's football in 1921, the WFA would have been cautious as ultimately the FA had full control of what they were allowed to do, even if they were the sole governing body for the women's game. Even in the aftermath of the ban on women's football an English Ladies' Football Association (ELFA) "with predictions of a membership of 'fifty- or sixty-women's clubs' and a competition consisting of five divisions", was able to be founded.<sup>108</sup> The main object of the ELFA was "to popularise the game amongst girls and to assist charity", this was not so dissimilar to both the Dick Kerr Ladies as well as the WFA.<sup>109</sup> The FA put in place

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<sup>104</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Page 82

<sup>105</sup> Women's Football Association. (1970, December 12). *Women's Football Association Executive Committee meeting minutes*. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/1), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>106</sup> Wrack, S. (2022, June 13). *How the FA banned women's football in 1921 and tried to justify it*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/jun/13/how-the-fa-banned-womens-football-in-1921-and-tried-to-justify-it>

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Skillen, F., Byrne, H., Carrier, J., & James, G. (2022). *'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*. *Sport in History*, 42(1), 49-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415> Page 53

<sup>109</sup> Brennan, P. (2007). *The English Ladies' Football Association*. Donmouth. [http://donmouth.co.uk/womens\\_football/elfa.html](http://donmouth.co.uk/womens_football/elfa.html)



“unsubstantiated charges of financial mismanagement” against the ELFA, which led to their aims to now “deal with the receipts that there shall be no possible ground for complaint”.<sup>110</sup> The ELFA decided that if it was going to be able to act as the female equivalent of the FA, they would have to reach more commercial ground and became ‘The English Ladies’ Football Association Limited’.<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, between the years of 1922 and 1931 the ELFA was dissolved and came to an end, as recorded in the London Gazette paper on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1931.<sup>112</sup> The story of the ELFA, demonstrates the complexity and delicacy that the WFA also had to undertake when trying to match the strength of the FA but also gain their support, which the ELFA did not achieve. Some elements the ELFA and WFA had in common concern the tournaments they managed to organise and the huge turn outs they achieved.<sup>113</sup> Again this emphasises the fact that the WFA had to be careful with the decisions they were making and the action they were putting in place as ELFA had similar aims to them and yet they did not survive. The actions of the 1971 squad travelling could have jeopardised them to the same extent as the ELFA, yet the WFA wanted to have a longer impact on future female footballers. Ultimately the WFA did end up achieving a similar fate to that of the ELFA in that they were taken back over by the FA in 1993, but dissimilar to the ELFA they had a span on twenty-seven years where they were able to make a difference to the way women’s football was perceived and ran.<sup>114</sup>

Thirdly, the most considerable impact the WFA have had on the future generation of female football is setting up the ‘official’ England squad in 1972.<sup>115</sup> On 18<sup>th</sup> November 1972, England took to the pitch at the Ravenscraig Stadium, Greenock against Scotland.<sup>116</sup> Despite the final score resulting in England’s victory of 3-2, ITV portrayed the half-time score of 2-1 to Scotland as the final score.<sup>117</sup> This was not start to the new founding of women’s football that the WFA was looking for. According to Sue Lopez, the official England team was set up “partly to negate Harry Batt’s unofficial England XI trips”.<sup>118</sup> Lopez “was the first Englishwomen to play semi-

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<sup>110</sup> Brennan, P. (2007). *The English Ladies' Football Association*. Donmouth. [http://donmouth.co.uk/womens\\_football/elfa.html](http://donmouth.co.uk/womens_football/elfa.html).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> The London Gazette. (1931, December 22). Companies Act, 1929. The London Gazette. <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/33782/page/8263> pages 8262 - 8263

<sup>113</sup> Brennan, P. (2007). *The English Ladies' Football Association*. Donmouth. [http://donmouth.co.uk/womens\\_football/elfa.html](http://donmouth.co.uk/womens_football/elfa.html)

<sup>114</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:50:44

<sup>115</sup> Word Press. *England - History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/england/>

<sup>116</sup> Word Press. *England - History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/england/>

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 59

professional football as an overseas player in Italy in 1971".<sup>119</sup> Despite her love of playing in Roma, the lure of potentially being able to play in the first England team in 1971 proved too great so she came back to England.<sup>120</sup> Lopez clearly had significant personal understanding of the development of the 'official' England squad and she suggested that the formation of this squad was partially down to the WFA trying to nullify the squads and achievements of Batt, giving substance to the idea. Assertively, Lopez argues that Arthur Hobbs was the "father of women's football".<sup>121</sup> Interestingly, members of the 1971 squad have suggested quite similarly that Harry Batt was "much a maverick and a visionary of the time because he did have the vision that women can play football".<sup>122</sup> This is a further point to suggest that the WFA may have seen potential in the efforts of Batt and his ventures with women's teams, and that despite the critics he may have been just as influential as Arthur Hobbs in promoting and ensuring the future of England women's football would be successful. It is therefore important to consider the impact that the Batts had on the development of the first England squad as without them, there may have never been an England Women's team so swiftly after the foundation of the WFA.

Moreover, the treatment the WFA gave to Harry and June Batt after the second unofficial World Cup tournament, may have been seen as a hindrance to the growth of the sport. Batt was by trade a bus driver and with the help of his wife June, the couple could see the potential for women's football to be taken seriously and have a positive future as was the case in other countries.<sup>123</sup> Batt was a part of the founding club members at the inaugural meeting of the WFA in 1969, representing his club Chiltern Valley.<sup>124</sup> In her book '*The History of Women's football*', Jean Williams has done much research into Batt's touring teams having a chapter dedicated to the years of his tours between 1968-1972.<sup>125</sup> Williams uses Chris Lockwood's testimony to describe Batt as being "a very astute man and very supportive of the game".<sup>126</sup> Even before the proposition of Mexico, the WFA had to deal with many problems raised by other leagues and clubs associated with Batt. In 1970, in the meeting minutes it was raised that the Batts should have a ban put in place against them as they had already been banned

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<sup>119</sup> National Football Museum. *Sue Lopez MBE*. National Football Museum.

<https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/halloffame/sue-lopez-mbe/>

<sup>120</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). '*Unsuitable for Females: The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England*.

Birlinn General. Page 73

<sup>121</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 55

<sup>122</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:09:05

<sup>123</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

<sup>124</sup> Word press. *Founder Clubs - History of the Women's Football Association*. Word press.

<https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/early-years/founder-clubs/>

<sup>125</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 96

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*. Page 116

by the South East of England league at that league's general annual meeting.<sup>127</sup> Two months after that, it was brought to the WFA's committee meeting again, suggesting that although Batt had paid a fine he owed to a coach company of his touring trips to Czechoslovakia, he should still be banned from the WFA.<sup>128</sup> It was decided that "after considerable argument... that the matter lie on the table".<sup>129</sup>

Despite Harry and June having experience in taking women's football teams abroad previously, for example to Italy in 1969 and 1970, the second unofficial Women's World Cup in Mexico was different.<sup>130</sup> Two months before the Mexico competition, the WFA committee asserted it would not recognise any team Harry or June Batt were involved with and as a result the Batts were effectively blacklisted.<sup>131</sup> In some respects this should have been a warning sign that perhaps going to Mexico against the wishes of the WFA may have been a mistake and that repercussions would follow, however they still attended. On the other hand, Batt had much experience in previous competitions and saw the growing strength in support and opportunities for women to play football. The Federation of Independent European Female Football (FIEFF), invited Batt to attend their first competition in 1969 and each year it grew more and more, whether that was down to the number of teams entering or the addition of sponsorships such as Martini & Rossi.<sup>132</sup> Given the strong 'amateur' stance of much of the management of football at this time the Batt's links to commercialised ventures were also probably frowned upon by the WFA. Batt seemed to be a driven individual seeking for change and improvement in the women's sport, but going against the WFA with no backing of financial support, resulted in very little hope for long-term impact. Batt and his players who stayed with Chiltern Valley were banned from playing, Batt for life and the players for some considerable months depending on age.<sup>133</sup> The repercussions of attending the tournament as an England team were quite extreme, however it did seem that the WFA were looking for ways to ban the Batt's due to other members of the WFA leagues raising concerns about them, and the Mexico tournament seems to have been the perfect cover.

Additionally, the WFA can be seen as acting fairly by preventing the 1971 squad from being able to continue on, due to the WFA having one main institution that made the decisions rather than rogue clubs potentially wasting resources. According to Patricia Gregory in order for the

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<sup>127</sup> Women's Football Association. (1970, June 6). *Women's Football Association Executive Committee meeting minutes*. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/1), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 96

<sup>131</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

<sup>132</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 96

<sup>133</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:18:47

WFA to work they needed to have structure and organisation to maintain unification, and because in the early days they still had a long way to go in order to see changes.<sup>134</sup> Liz Deighan, player during the WFA, discusses how this level of organisation and hard work by the WFA paid off, this was because they had to find sponsors for kit and competitions and that nothing came for free for them, but they started off the foundation of what we see today.<sup>135</sup> According to Gregory the WFA also made a difference through the production of the WFA newsletters which were sent to those who were members, keeping them informed about the upcoming competitions and ongoings of the league within the WFA.<sup>136</sup> Gregory said that it was important that “all the Members had to feel they were getting something”.<sup>137</sup> With limited funds, being able to reach out to their other members and providing games and kits they could play in, was a great feat. By the 1971 squad attending the Mexico tournament, members may have felt they had missed out on an opportunity and it may have caused issues for the fledgling organisation. In some way this was the only option the WFA could take in order to protect their growing numbers.

The long-term impacts the WFA have had on football today have often been untold, even the players achievements under the WFA have been neglected. For example, Pat Mitchell-Firth explained how she was quite upset when the sporting commentators described Jodie Taylor as being the first English player to score a hat-trick in an international match.<sup>138</sup> In reality, Mitchell-Firth was the first English player to score a hat-trick in an international match, the difference was that Taylor’s was in a major competition and yet they neglected to mention that fact.<sup>139</sup> The efforts of the WFA and the players to get women’s football restarted are often pushed aside but have huge impact in where women’s football is today. The WFA had more long-term impact than the 13 players of the 1971 squad could, but neither have been adequately discussed throughout the history of women’s football. Despite this relatively positive impact, the extent to which the England team formed by the WFA was ‘official’ compared to Harry Batt’s different ‘England’ teams. Chris Slegg states that the WFA were responsible for setting up the Women’s FA cup and the first England team.<sup>140</sup> The FA is the governing body of England women’s football and on viewing their website they suggest that “the first official WFA England team travelled to Scotland for an international match” in 1972, the same year that “UEFA recommended that the women’s game should be governed by

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<sup>134</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:42:42

<sup>135</sup> L. Deighan, ‘*Liz Deighan interview*’. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:24:24

<sup>136</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:52:41

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* 00:52:50

<sup>138</sup> P. Mitchell-Firth, *interview*. January 26, 2023. 00:21:31

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* 00:21:40

<sup>140</sup> Gregory, P., & Slegg, C. (2021). A history of the women's FA cup final. The history press. Page 14

national associations".<sup>141</sup> Women's football at this time was under the newly established WFA, not the FA despite UEFA's recommendations.<sup>142</sup> The FA page also specifies that the first official England Women's international match was in 1972, but it again does not make it clear what makes it official.<sup>143</sup> It also does not include any mention of the England Women's team from the so called second unofficial Women's World Cup.<sup>144</sup> Leah Caleb explained how many of the touring teams that Harry Batt took abroad were referred to as England throughout media and merchandise.<sup>145</sup> Caleb continues by suggesting that without Batt's continuous efforts to promote an England team unofficially, there might have never been an England team officially.<sup>146</sup>

However, Patricia Gregory argues that any thought of the 1971 squad being named 'England' is disrespectful to those players who went through the endless trials to get into the official England squad - they appear as "usurpers".<sup>147</sup> Yet, in FIFA's book, *The Official History of the FIFA Women's World Cup: The story of women's football from 1881 to the present*, they recognise the 1971 tournament and England squad.<sup>148</sup> This in some ways undermines the WFA's stance on the squad as Patricia Gregory said she wished that FIFA had not included this tournament, due to it giving them "credence".<sup>149</sup> Gregory continues to say that although FIFA discuss that it was not a FIFA tournament, 1970 and 1971 both had representatives from England and that she would have preferred it if they just did not mention it at all.<sup>150</sup> It is intriguing that FIFA is a little careless with the wording and representation of the squads representing England if you take the WFA's stance on the tournament. However from the perspective of the 1971 squad they would feel as though they were a serious team for England and this begs the question as to what extent the so called official squad were made official over an England team dubbed so by FIFA?

Unsurprisingly, the view on Women's football during the foundation of the WFA was still relatively negative. Pat Mitchell-Firth recalls how in her early playing career attitudes towards Women's football were shaped by the view that it was an opportunity to go and watch a match

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<sup>141</sup> The FA. (2023). *THE STORY OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND*. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers>

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:26:17

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 00:28:14

<sup>147</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 01:14:05

<sup>148</sup> FIFA World Football Museum. (2020). *The Official History of the FIFA Women's World Cup*. Carlton books. Pages 28-33

<sup>149</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:24:21

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* 00:23:53

“for a laugh”.<sup>151</sup> In an article titled “One field women still have to tackle” published by *The Observer* in 1972, the newspaper discusses the uphill battle for the WFA to get funding and sponsors.<sup>152</sup> Sue Lopez compares the difference between playing football in Italy from England, suggesting that in Italy the public and press would treat women’s footballers with respect and as a normal sportswoman, because they loved the sport and watching women’s football.<sup>153</sup> Continuing, Lopez described how there was a lack of money in England and women’s football was constantly belittled.<sup>154</sup> Despite the lack of funding and getting expenses back, Liz Deighan emphasises that it did not matter as all they wanted to do was play for England.<sup>155</sup>

Aside from the expenses even after the formation of the WFA, there was still very stereotypical views on women playing football. Mitchell-Firth recalls the torn cartilage injury she sustained that ended her footballing career and the doctor’s response. The doctor she had been to see had told her that no female body is fit to play football and that even if she recovered from the injury she should not play again as it was wrong.<sup>156</sup> This echoes the comments made by the FA in 1921, suggesting that football is quite unsuitable for a women to play and “that the game could be harmful to female participants”.<sup>157</sup> This was over fifty years later, and the repetition of the same message that football and women should not mix demonstrates how although the WFA were looking to make change, that unfortunately there were still those who were against it. Consequently, the WFA may not have been in favour of the 1971 tournament due to the current stereotypes in England. The reception that women’s football received back in England after the 1971 tournament, due to the last place finish in the tournament and the team sadly losing all three games, may have been a further set back to stereotypes of the game.<sup>158</sup> Even today there is still a disregard to the interest in Women’s football, evidently so in the medical side of the game, with more and more players getting injured and a lack of understanding as

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<sup>151</sup> P. Mitchell-Firth, *interview*, January, 26, 2023. 00:03:36

<sup>152</sup> Puddefoot, S. (1972, Aug 20). *One field women still have to tackle*. *The Observer* (1901- 2003) <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/one-field-women-still-have-tackle/docview/476084535/se-2>

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> L. Deighan, ‘*Liz Deighan interview*’. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:24:07

<sup>156</sup> P. Mitchell-Firth, *interview*, January, 26, 2023. 00:04:32

<sup>157</sup> Byrne, H, Carrier, J, James, G & Skillen, F. (2022) ‘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. *Sport in History*, 42:1, 49-75, DOI: 10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415. Page 49

<sup>158</sup> Taylor, L. (2019, June 8). *From pink goalposts to blue plaques: a history of women’s football*. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/08/from-pink-goalposts-to-blue-plaques-a-history-of-womens-football>

to how to prevent it.<sup>159</sup> The legacy of all players from both the WFA and the 1971 tournament onwards could not quicken the long lasting impact the FA would eventually have on the way female footballers are perceived. Even in the modern day there is still much work to be done to make the sport a more sustainable success for future generations.

The response to FIFA's acceptance of the 1971 tournament despite not actually being involved with it, led the WFA to be hesitant to allow the squad to get away with an unofficial tournament. FIFA itself was founded in Paris on 21 May 1904, its motivations were to organise the world's most popular sport.<sup>160</sup> The foundation act was signed by European representatives from France, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland on that very day.<sup>161</sup> England eventually joined FIFA in 1906, only to stay until 1928, missing out on entering the first World Cup in 1930.<sup>162</sup> It was not until 1949 that England Men re-joined and took part in their first World Cup in 1950.<sup>163</sup> Due to the ban on women's football not being lifted until 20 years after this, FIFA had no dealings with the WFA at the start of the organisation. The strategic aims for Women's football according to FIFA's website is that, "FIFA is working to empower girls and women, make football a sport for all and advocate against gender discrimination".<sup>164</sup> However the first official strategy document on FIFA's official website was not published until 2018.<sup>165</sup> Despite the first FIFA Women's World Cup occurring in 1991, it seems that not until very recently due to publicity, did the attention of FIFA become more apparent in the women's game.<sup>166</sup>

Referring back to the WFA, in 1988 FIFA organised a 'trial' Women's World Cup tournament in China which was by invitation only.<sup>167</sup> Interestingly England were not part of the team representing UEFA in this tournament.<sup>168</sup> Due to the success of this tournament FIFA got to planning the first official Women's World Cup in 1991, which again England were not a part

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<sup>159</sup> Wright, K. (2023). *Leah Williamson: Why are so many female footballers suffering ACL injuries?* BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/64032536>

<sup>160</sup> FIFA. *About us - Organisation*. FIFA. <https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa>

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> Football History.org. *England national team - history and facts*. Football History.org. <https://www.footballhistory.org/national/england.html>

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> FIFA. *Women's Football*. FIFA. <https://www.fifa.com/womens-football>

<sup>165</sup> FIFA. *Women's Football - official documents*. FIFA. <https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/official-documents?filterId=34EnUsHdgRdtsiuywwJtx>

<sup>166</sup> FIFA. (2018). *Women's Football Strategy*. FIFA.

<https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/baafcb84f1b54a8/original/z7w21ghir8jb9tguvbcq-pdf.pdf>

<sup>167</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Page 104

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.* Page 104

of.<sup>169</sup> The first World Cup that England qualified for was not until 1995.<sup>170</sup> Due to the WFA's control of women's football being taken back over by the FA in 1993, the WFA had no involvement in the first appearance of the Lionesses at the World Cup in 1995.<sup>171</sup> Overall, the WFA may have aspired to be part of a World Cup but it was not under the WFA when the change was going to happen. The WFA may have had a big impact on the ability to actually have the opportunity to play in a World Cup, however Patricia Gregory explained how at the time of 1971 it was too early for the WFA and that the likes of Sue Lopez would have also loved to play.<sup>172</sup> A question that still remains is whether or not the WFA would have had a successful England team in a World Cup more quickly and to the same extent as the 1971 girls did, if they had stayed in control over the women's football longer.

One long term impact that the WFA have been responsible for, is the leagues that they created and made possible for the girls and women today. Patricia Gregory explains how she feels that the WSL would not be what it is without the influence of the WFA.<sup>173</sup> After discussing the development of Women's football at the start of the twenty-first century, Liz Deighan commented how within 10 years of the 1990s, women's football progressed rapidly.<sup>174</sup> Deighan continued to explain how the National League was formed, and then the National League was split into two, there was the Northern Division and the Southern Division, so women's football was finally becoming national.<sup>175</sup> Deighan founded Newton Ladies in 1989, the team who would eventually become Liverpool Ladies.<sup>176</sup> She commented how it was nice to see a team she founded to become a top class women's football team.<sup>177</sup> Intrinsicly the impact of the WFA and individual players who played under the WFA can be seen as quite long-term. On the other hand, the first leagues were not set up until 1991, while the Women's Super League was not officially founded until 2011 so why did the WFA not have an immediate impact?<sup>178</sup> Deighan presented the view that by 1993, the FA taking over the WFA was inevitable, due to women's football having rapid growth and following, and the volunteers who

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<sup>169</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Pages 105 - 106

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.* Page 108

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* Page 109

<sup>172</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:22:04

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* 00:53:26

<sup>174</sup> L. Deighan, '*Liz Deighan interview*'. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:27:31

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* 00:27:41

<sup>176</sup> Women's Football Archive. (2016). *Players: Liz Deighan*. Women's Football Archive.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160314052518/http://womensfootballarchive.com/2016/03/06/players-liz-deighan/>

<sup>177</sup> L. Deighan, '*Liz Deighan interview*'. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:18:04

<sup>178</sup> The FA. (2023). THE STORY OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers>



had been working for many decades were out of funding so it was time to take the necessary steps for it to continue to progress.<sup>179</sup> The WFA were not all for the change however, in an interview with the *Independent*, Linda Whitehead, the WFA secretary for 13 years is quoted saying, 'a lot of people felt very bitter. It wasn't what they wanted to do, it was the way they did it - they just rode roughshod all over us.'<sup>180</sup> However, under the control of the FA after the take over, a new found future had been established for women's football. In 1997 the FA outlined 'its plans to develop the women's game from grassroots to elite level', something the WFA was yet to establish.<sup>181</sup> Another milestone achievement under the FA was that three years ahead of schedule, football had now become the top participation sport for girls and women in England.<sup>182</sup> To conclude, the WFA set up the foundations that in the long-term had some very positive impacts to the game today, but the actual changes and growth financially to get there was conducted by the FA. Without the ideas and organisation by the volunteers at the WFA, the FA may not have continued the path the WFA had left for the development of women's football.

Finally, the WFA were able to maintain a long-term effect on women's football by lifting the ban. On the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021, it marked the centenary of the FA's ban of women's football.<sup>183</sup> There had been formal attempts to organise games between teams of women within 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>184</sup> Despite these early efforts to kickstart the game, it took much time for the support for the game to take shape. Following on from that, the men's league was suspended in 1915 and women's football became enormously popular so much so that by 1921 there were 150 women's clubs.<sup>185</sup> Made up of 60 upper-class male members, the FA 'banned women's football from being played at their grounds or officiated by their referees using the reasoning that it was a "danger to

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<sup>179</sup> L. Deighan, 'Liz Deighan interview'. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:22:44

<sup>180</sup> Davies, P. (1994, October 6). *Football: Tough test for the team England forgot: As England's women prepare for their biggest ever fixture and the game continues to flourish at club level, the FA's commitment to the grassroots is being questioned. Pete Davies reports.* Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football-tough-test-for-the-team-england-forgot-as-england-s-women-prepare-for-their-biggest-ever-fixture-and-the-game-continues-to-flourish-at-club-level-the-fa-s-commitment-to-the-grassroots-is-being-questioned-pete-1441525.html>

<sup>181</sup> The FA. (2023). THE STORY OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers>

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Byrne, H, Carrier, J, James, G & Skillen, F. (2022) '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. *Sport in History*, 42:1, 49-75, DOI: 10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415. Page 49

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* Page 52

<sup>185</sup> The University of Manchester. (2021). "Quite unsuitable for females" – 100 years since women's football ban. The University of Manchester. <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/quite-unsuitable-for-females/>

women's health".<sup>186</sup> Medical experts sympathetic to the FA's stance, alleged that being hit by a football could damage a woman's child-bearing ability.<sup>187</sup> The lifting of the ban, according to Patricia Gregory came in 1970, not in 1971 as many believe due to the pressure from the WFA.<sup>188</sup> Manchester University make quite clear and a bold claim that "it took fifty years for them to finally lift the ban in 1971, after an English women's team had become popular by taking part in an unofficial World Cup in Mexico".<sup>189</sup> Suggesting that the second unofficial World Cup was the reason as to why the ban was lifted on women's football is a quite misguided point to make. Due to the ban being lifted in 1970, according to Patricia Gregory, it could not possibly be down to the 1971 tournament that influenced the FA's decision.<sup>190</sup> However this has been contested by many sources that suggest that the ban on woman's football was actually lifted in 1971.<sup>191</sup> The WFA managed to do something that those in women's footballing history could not achieve, which was to keep the pressure on the FA to see the potential in the sport, without causing repercussions alike to those who came before. In order to protect their powerful position, the punishments handed out to the 1971 squad meant that the WFA could look like it was in control over the situation, despite the fact that according to Patricia Gregory they were not.<sup>192</sup> For example in a Daily Express newspaper produced in England, Gregory tried to tell them that they were not called England, but the logistics did not matter as the Daily Express believed that they were players from England, so were deemed so, which could have also gone against the rules the WFA had to follow.<sup>193</sup> Ensuring that the lifting of the ban was upheld was vital to the WFA. The WFA may have been held responsible by the FA if Harry Batt's team had any major repercussions to the view of England as a whole, so by neutralising the squad it meant that they could protect themselves at all costs just in case.

In conclusion, The WFA did have a major impact on women's football, creating new opportunities for the sport which had never been seen before. Kerry Davis confirmed that the most important influence the WFA had was that "they got women's football started".<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> The University of Manchester. (2021). "Quite unsuitable for females" – 100 years since women's football ban. The University of Manchester. <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/quite-unsuitable-for-females/>

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:11:00

<sup>189</sup> The University of Manchester. (2021). "Quite unsuitable for females" – 100 years since women's football ban. The University of Manchester. <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/quite-unsuitable-for-females/>

<sup>190</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:11:00

<sup>191</sup> BBC. (2014). *WW1: Why was women's football banned in 1921?* BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30329606>

<sup>192</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:10:07

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* 00:06:31

<sup>194</sup> K. Davis, *interview*, March 6, 2023. 00:15:58

However according to Patricia Gregory she suggested that the WFA had to join and give all their resources back to the FA as there was no way they “were going to make the progress” they needed to make solely as the WFA.<sup>195</sup> It seems in the short term the WFA’s efforts into women’s football was a big impact, however in some respects it may appear like that due to there being nothing available for 50 years prior to the WFA. One crucial fact that cannot be completely dismissed is the founding of a successful league by the WFA. Whether or not the FA intervening made a difference to the WSL, the foundation of the WSL has been down to the WFA. The relationship between the WFA and Harry Batt does seem to have been very bitter, and although Batt knew the rules of the FA due to being a member of the WFA, he still went against it and jeopardised everything the WFA and he himself was trying to achieve. Undeniably, Batt’s had a huge impact of the speed at which an England women’s squad was organised due to the WFA wanting to stamp out any memory of this tournament and to also prove that they could make a squad that would remain for years to come. Although the WFA did make some errors and were sometimes very safe in the decisions they took, in terms of the long-term effect of future players, the WFA did bring a new identity and start to change the way that the FA approached women’s football. Without the WFA, the ban on women’s football would have probably lasted even longer and due to Patricia Gregory and Arthur Hobbs, today’s future prospects of the sport have the option to play with mass facilities and support that the WFA fought for.

Moving away from the WFA’s position on how women’s football should have been run according to them and the FA, is Harry and June Batt with their touring team to Mexico in 1971. The next chapter brings a different understanding of the 1971 second unofficial World Cup and understanding of the future potential of the competition.

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<sup>195</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:50:59

## Chapter 2: The opposition – The perspectives of the 1971 squad

This chapter consists of an assessment of the inspirational stories and struggles faced by the 1971 unofficial squad members and why they feel they were in the right for going against the WFA and FA's wishes by attending the tournament in Mexico. Before Mexico as already mentioned, Harry Batt was involved with women's football.<sup>196</sup> In 1969, the Federation of Independent European Female Football (FIEFF) was formed and extended an invite to Batt asking him to form an England squad to attend the tournament *Coppa Europa per Nazioni*.<sup>197</sup> After already having this experience, Batt took another team to Mexico in 1971 sponsored by Martini & Rossi.<sup>198</sup> Even in the early stages of the WFA, they were organised well enough to put in place a life time ban against Harry Batt for taking Chiltern Valley girls to Mexico under the name 'English independents' rather than 'England'.<sup>199</sup> There has been small pieces written surrounding the tournament of 1971, but very little from the perspectives of the players themselves. The BBC website however, written by Ian Youngs, is a great example of how the 1971 tournament is more recently being explained from those who were directly involved.<sup>200</sup> Since there has been very little recollection from the players, this chapter has been built around the personal testimonies of the players of 1971. From these interviews the following themes as to why they were in the right for going to Mexico have been identified: the first unofficial World Cup went ahead without any repercussions so the second could have been the same; the mass support and positive treatment they received whilst there; the history of women's football and the lifting of the ban were motivations, and how Chiltern Valley had nothing to lose and believed that anybody would have taken the opportunity if it was available, although evidently some did not. On the other hand, there may have been a miscalculation in terms of what was actually expected of the team and the resources available in the year they went. A key recurring thought throughout the 1971 squad was if the WFA had not banned or treated them so poorly on their return, there might have been a successful England Women's squad a lot more quickly.<sup>201</sup>

Firstly, in 1966, the impact of the first World Cup to be held in England affected both men and women as both players and spectators.<sup>202</sup> The hysteria of the 1966 tournament left a national

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<sup>196</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 51

<sup>197</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 97

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* Page 100

<sup>199</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 61

<sup>200</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

<sup>201</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:11:56

feeling of unity, much like the atmosphere of the coronation in 1953.<sup>203</sup> Aside from the 1966 success, Ted Hart, who had worked as a public relations (PR) representative for England during the 1970 men's World Cup, is known to have approached Harry Batt with the idea of holding another Women's World Cup at Wembley in 1972.<sup>204</sup> Due to the mass crowd numbers that were achieved in Mexico, it suggested such a tournament could be a success.<sup>205</sup> Hart also had the backing of 1966 heroes 'Bobby Moore and Geoff Hurst, and a pledge of £150,000 sponsorship'.<sup>206</sup> Hart's approach to Batt suggests that he was confident that Batt had the experience and ideas that would make the tournament a possibility, and that the WFA perhaps could not be relied on in the same way. According to the members of the 1971 squad, June and Harry Batt were a team. June was the one who wanted a women's team and Harry helped and supported her to do it.<sup>207</sup> Leah Caleb suggests that the WFA knew what they were doing when they banned Batt and that "they wanted to be part of what Harry had".<sup>208</sup> Contrary to common belief the 1966 World Cup was not a turning point for the growth of women's football as it was making strides before and after the tournament, however it did help.<sup>209</sup> According to *Statista* the average game attendance of the 1991 World Cup was 19,651 spectators.<sup>210</sup> Since the competition began, the highest game average in a Women's World Cup was recorded in 1999 was 37,319 spectators.<sup>211</sup> In comparison the tournament of 1971 saw the final between Denmark and Mexico had around 110,000 spectators.<sup>212</sup> Despite the second unofficial women's World Cup not being a FIFA sanctioned competition it shows the interest in Women's football was there as early as 1971. It also shows that if Batt had been allowed to get involved in a World Cup in England a year later, there may have been further opportunities to push the sport into the forefront of the public eye sooner. If it had been more accessible more quickly then maybe there would have been a shift in the dynamic of women's football. However what

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<sup>202</sup> Pope, S. (2016). *Female fan experiences and interpretations of the 1958 Munich air disaster, the 1966 World Cup finals and the rise of footballers as sexualised national celebrities*. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 51(7), 777-894. <https://doi.org/https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/1012690214558284>. Page 852

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.* 852

<sup>204</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

<sup>207</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:08:01

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.* 00:11:07

<sup>209</sup> Dunn, C. (2016;2015;). *Football and the Women's World Cup: Organisation, media and fandom* (1st 2016. ed.). Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137567338> Page 9

<sup>210</sup> Statista. (2022). *Average number of spectators at games of the FIFA Women's World Championships from 1991 to 2019*. Statista Research Department. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272800/average-number-of-spectators-at-the-fifa-womens-world-cup/>

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> Common Goal. (2022). *1971 UNOFFICIAL WORLD CUP*. Common Goal. <https://www.common-goal.org/Stories/1971-Unofficial-World-Cup2022-08-19>

does have to be considered is that the relationship between the Batts and the WFA may have been too bitter for a successful team and tournament to come off well and ultimately it could have had the opposite effect on women's football.

"Any clubs proposing to make a tour outside the British Isles must first obtain the sanction of the Executive committee by submitting application to the Honorary Secretary of the association clubs give them permission to tour".<sup>213</sup> This was one of the foundation requirements set out by the WFA and the FA, making it clear to the 1971 Mexico squad manager Harry Batt, which he did know about when he went to Mexico. Attending the second unofficial World Cup may have been a miscalculation which could have delayed the impact to future players of the sport. Whilst going to the tournament politics and female stereotypes were brought to the forefront in the media discrediting what the tournament was trying to achieve. In an article from the *Reading Evening Post* there was mention of the final between Mexico and Denmark, because of the Mexico squad feeling as though they deserved to be paid, due to the tournament making a lot of money from their success.<sup>214</sup> The president of the organisation, Jamie De Haro, suggested that it would not have been possible as they would have to pay the other teams that attended the tournament.<sup>215</sup> By getting involved with the politics outside of the jurisdiction of the WFA and when politics within England at the time were still in question would have been problematic. The enduring soft amateurism of the FA at this time is again important in defining attitudes towards Batt and his ventures. It seems likely that the FA were willing to tolerate women amateurs but not yet women professionals.

Additionally, European tournaments leading to what is now known to be UEFA run tournaments, may have also encouraged the 1971 squad and their endeavours of success for England. In 1957 the International Ladies Football Association (ILFA) organised a tournament to be held in Germany with 4 teams competing, including England represented by Manchester Corinthians.<sup>216</sup> The ILFA was set up in Nuremberg on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1957, with lawyer Dr Bernaritz on an annual salary of 10,000 Swiss Francs.<sup>217</sup> Due to the organisation hiring a lawyer specifically and him being paid substantial salary to oversee the organisation, demonstrates that there was a strong foundation well before the WFA or the 1971 tournament in Mexico. The teams involved in the 1957 tournament were West Germany, England, Austria

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<sup>213</sup> Women's Football Association. (1971, June 5). Women's Football Association Annual General meeting. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/2), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>214</sup> Reading Evening Post. (1971, September 3). *Football final threatened*. Reading Evening Post. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002471/19710903/118/0013?browse=False>

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>216</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 126

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*. Page 126

and the Netherlands.<sup>218</sup> The England team despite losing 2-1 to the Netherlands in the opening game, made it to the final beating West Germany 4-1.<sup>219</sup> Bert Trautmann, who was a German Goalkeeper and an FA Cup winner for Manchester City, was coach for the England team.<sup>220</sup> In a video from *Pathé News films*, Trautmann can be seen starting the match and sat in amongst the crowd enjoying the game, demonstrating that as early as 1957 there was an interest in women's football even by a famous sportsman like Trautmann.<sup>221</sup> Interestingly however, the Deutscher Fußball-Bund (DFB) the organising body in German football, had a ban on Women's football at the same time as this tournament, due to women's football being prohibited to play on DFB grounds in 1955.<sup>222</sup> It was not until 1970 when the ban on women's football was lifted in Germany, the same year as it was in England by the FA.<sup>223</sup> Intrinsically, there is a direct link between the upsurge of women's football around Europe at a similar period of time and yet the first official Women's Euro tournament did not take place until 1984.<sup>224</sup> Again much like the 1971 unofficial tournament in relation to the first official World Cup, it took considerable time for the progress of European women's football to take shape. The final of 1984 took place across two legs, one in Sweden with an attendance of 5,662 and the other in England with a crowd attendance of 2,565 so a combined total of 8,227.<sup>225</sup> The final in West Germany in 1957 had a crowd total of 11,000 with only 4 teams competing.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, referring back to the 1971 tournament in Mexico they had crowd numbers of up to 90,000, with again only 4 teams competing.<sup>227</sup> This highlights how smaller and earlier tournaments were more popular with fans of women's football and that it could have been much more widely supported if sporting organisations had acted upon the potential demand and sporting opportunities that these tournaments provided. Unfortunately, due to the slow progress it took for organising bodies to take notice of women's football, the potential trigger to kickstart opportunities earlier had been missed and the future of women's football was delayed massively.

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<sup>218</sup> Hoffmann, E & Nendza, J. (2007). *Damenfußball in der Verbotszeit*. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. <https://www.bpb.de/themen/sport/graue-spielzeit/65065/damenfussball-in-der-verbotszeit/>

<sup>219</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 126

<sup>220</sup> Hoffmann, E & Nendza, J. (2007). *Damenfußball in der Verbotszeit*. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. <https://www.bpb.de/themen/sport/graue-spielzeit/65065/damenfussball-in-der-verbotszeit/>

<sup>221</sup> Lloyd Vitols. (2020, June 6). *Pathé news film* [Video]. Lloyd Vitols. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vS1U\\_AWWRM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vS1U_AWWRM)

<sup>222</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 126

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.* Page 126

<sup>224</sup> UEFA. *Women's Euro history*. UEFA . <https://www.uefa.com/womenseuro/history/seasons/1984/teams/>

<sup>225</sup> Svenskfortboll. *A-landskamper 1973-2000*. Svenskfortboll. <https://www.svenskfotboll.se/landslag/dam/landskamper-1973-2000/>

<sup>226</sup> Hoffman, E & Nendza, J. (2007). *Damenfußball in der Verbotszeit*. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. <https://www.bpb.de/themen/sport/graue-spielzeit/65065/damenfussball-in-der-verbotszeit/>

<sup>227</sup> The FA. *LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HERITAGE OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN MILTON KEYNES*. The FA. <https://www.thefa.com/competitions/uefa-womens-euro-2022/heritage/milton-keynes-heritage>

Thirdly, the previous history of female football meant that the 1971 tournament stood out and created further opportunities and options for the WFA. The first noted women's international match was on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1881 between Scotland and England.<sup>228</sup> The *Edinburgh Evening News* reported on the match on the 9<sup>th</sup> May describing how "the spectators was good for an ordinary match, but a larger number might have been expected to turn out to witness such an unusual spectacle".<sup>229</sup> In Portsmouth, in the other side of the United Kingdom from Scotland, the *Portsmouth Evening News* noted that 'the game was, on the whole, a very mild kind of football; but as the players warmed to their work, the running and dribbling received the commendation of the spectators'.<sup>230</sup> The same report was syndicated across both separate newspapers in England and Scotland marking the start of media coverage of the women's game. Similarly to this match the Dick Kerr Ladies played a charity match on boxing day in 1920, with 53,000 spectators able to gain entrance but an estimated 10,000-14,000 turned away from Goodison's Park.<sup>231</sup> The difference in the description within the media between 1881 and 1920 is the gratefulness of the money raised for the war efforts by the Dick Kerr's. For example *Bee's Sports Notes* in the *Echo* observed that 'the ladies at Goodison Park gave us all much pleasure'.<sup>232</sup> For the 1971 tournament, there was mass publicity in the media at the time, but not in the UK. In a Mexican magazine company called *Impacto*, the front page was titled 'Las Danesas, Campeonas', which translates to The Danes, Champions (Appendix 3).<sup>233</sup> Denmark won the tournament and by making the front page of the magazine demonstrated the popularity of the tournament in Mexico.<sup>234</sup> Within the pages of the magazine there are images of the matches and in the background the crowds, further proving that the tournament was successful and hugely popular in the country.<sup>235</sup> In polar opposite, as previously mentioned the first official international England ladies match score was incorrectly presented on ITV and shows that in 1972 there was carelessness and lack of interest in the women's game.<sup>236</sup> Within the WFA's history there was little television or media publicity,

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<sup>228</sup> Tate, T. (2016). *Women's Football - The Secret History: The Secret History of Women's Football*. John Blake Publishing Ltd. Page 6

<sup>229</sup> Edinburgh Evening News. (1881, May 9). *Ladies Football Match in Edinburgh*. Edinburgh Evening News. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000452/18810509/045/0003>

<sup>230</sup> Portsmouth Evening News. (1881, May 10). *Ladies Football Match in Edinburgh*. Portsmouth Evening News. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000290/18810510/016/0003>

<sup>231</sup> Tate, T. (2016). *Women's Football - The Secret History: The Secret History of Women's Football*. John Blake Publishing Ltd. Page 196

<sup>232</sup> Beesley, C. (2021, December 26). *Why 53,000 watched Goodison Park game Everton never played in as 10,000 locked out*. Liverpool Echo. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/goodison-park-everton-22574784>

<sup>233</sup> Llegro, R. H. (1971, September 15). *Las Danesas, Campeonas!* *Impacto*, (1124), 30-35. National Football Museum archive, Deepdale Preston. PRSFM. 2019.58.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> Word Press. *England - History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/england/>



whereas today there is huge media coverage of women's football. In a survey published in 2021, it was discovered that if women's football was made 'easily accessible on TV, the viewership could increase by 300%-350%'.<sup>237</sup> If media coverage would have continued within women's football, there is potential that the speed at which it became more popular within the UK could have continued to grow and grow more quickly. The international tournament of 1971 had a huge following in Mexico and if more tournaments had been allowed to go ahead this trend could have spread more globally, having a greater impact on the future players and supporters of women's football.

In addition to the history of the women's football, the team of Chiltern Valley had nothing to lose by attending and the team itself had an impact on future upcoming players. The majority of the squad picked for Mexico were members of the Chiltern Valley club, managed by June and Harry Batt.<sup>238</sup> However some of the additional players were picked by the Batt's from other clubs around Britain too.<sup>239</sup> Arthur Hobbs, told Batt that he was not allowed to go and represent the team as anything other than Chiltern Valley according to the constitution.<sup>240</sup> Following Mr Hunt's serious comments regarding Harry Batt's non compliancy with the constitution the WFA's response was that, "the WFA does not accept any team or any other organisation for affiliation with which Mr and Mrs Batt are associated".<sup>241</sup> In an interview with Chris Lockwood, Lockwood explains how she was scouted by Harry Batt to play for his team.<sup>242</sup> She stated they were a very successful team and virtually won the league every year, won many cups and had a bag full of medals.<sup>243</sup> Lockwood also hints at the idea that despite playing sometimes on difficult pitches due to the FA ban, they were just so happy that it never phased them.<sup>244</sup> This euphoric feeling may have clouded Batt's judgement after being told by the WFA that he was not allowed to go to Mexico. The members of the squad themselves also had this view that as

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<sup>237</sup> Chaudhary, V. (2021) *Viewership to Quadruple [Women's Football Survey]*. RunRepeat.  
<https://runrepeat.com/viewership-to-quadruple-womens-football-survey>

<sup>238</sup> The Newsroom. (2019, May 2). 'My time as a 15-year-old girl playing football in 1971 Mexico World Cup'. The Yorkshire Post. <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/people/my-time-as-a-15-year-old-girl-playing-football-in-1971-mexico-world-cup-1755826>

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> P. Gregory, interview, December 13, 2022. 00:04:46

<sup>241</sup> Women's Football Association. (1971, June 5). *Women's Football Association Annual General meeting*. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/2), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>242</sup> Living Archive Milton Keynes. (2022, July 1). *Interview with Christine Lockwood* [Video]. Living Archive Milton Keynes. [https://www.livingarchive.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_item/womens-euros-project/christine-lockwood/interview-with-christine-lockwood](https://www.livingarchive.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/womens-euros-project/christine-lockwood/interview-with-christine-lockwood)

<sup>243</sup> Living Archive Milton Keynes. (2022, July 1). *Interview with Christine Lockwood* [Video]. Living Archive Milton Keynes. [https://www.livingarchive.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_item/womens-euros-project/christine-lockwood/interview-with-christine-lockwood](https://www.livingarchive.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/womens-euros-project/christine-lockwood/interview-with-christine-lockwood)

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

a club they had nothing to lose by going to Mexico as it would help the team to continue to have amazing experiences and at young ages it was like a dream come true.<sup>245</sup>

However on return to London after the tournament, the media turned the dream into a nightmare condemning the players due to the WFA's stance.<sup>246</sup> The *Daily Mirror* published an article describing how many of the players who went to Mexico came back injured because of 'unladylike matches against Mexico and Argentina'.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore it emphasises how the WFA had condemned the team with potential bans to be put in place.<sup>248</sup> Harry Batt's reply to this potential threat was "We don't recognise the WFA. I won't care two hoots what the WFA does".<sup>249</sup> Instead of the tournament and the WFA's future being seen as a positive for women's football as a whole, the presentation of women's football was shown as divided and as some entertainment for the public rather than a matter to be taken seriously. The team that were represented as England in the media, were an ordinary team of many young girls who got mixed up in the politics of the time which meant their message of taking every opportunity you can for a female footballer can be seen as defiance. Although Batt may have had involvement in the political battle, the girls did not. The WFA missed a chance to use the experience of Batt and the players to build on future tournaments but let politics and the media get in the way.

Moreover, the 1971 tournament brought a new sense of support and popularity that had not been seen in women's football ever before. As already mentioned the England representatives played in front of crowds of 90,000 fans at the Azteca stadium in Mexico city.<sup>250</sup> This size of crowd had never been reached for a women's match, but the closest number was 53,000 seen in 1920 by the Dick Kerr Ladies.<sup>251</sup> Over 50 years between the two matches, one being national and another being international, demonstrates the volume of interest abroad. The highest recorded crowd attendance in the WSL is a total of 47,367, which was between Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur.<sup>252</sup> With that total being under both the attendance number of the Dick Kerr's and the Second unofficial World Cup, further emphasises the point that the highest amount of viewing for a Women's match with English connections was in 1971. Since

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<sup>245</sup> BBC One. (2022, August 2). *The Lost Lionesses* [Video]. BBC One.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=7958564540852739>

<sup>246</sup> Goodman, G. (1971, September 8). *Soccer girls limp home to a rumpus*. *Daily Mirror*.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000560/19710908/011/0001>

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> BBC. (2019). *Women's World Cup: 1971 'lost lionesses' squad tracked down after 48 years*. BBC Sport.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/48771268>

<sup>251</sup> Dick Kerr Ladies. *About the Team - Team Highlights*. Dick Kerr Ladies.

<https://www.dickkerrladies.com/about-the-team>

<sup>252</sup> The FA. (2022). *Record-breakers! Women's Leagues and competitions - The FA*.

<https://womenscompetitions.thefa.com/en/Article/barclays-womens-super-league-new-records-20222909>

1971, there has been a higher numbers for either a domestic or international match in England. In 1972 the Women's FA cup final between Southampton and Lee's Ladies, resulted in crowd attendance of 1,500 at Eton Park.<sup>253</sup> It was not until 2001 where the crowd attendance reached over 4 figures with 13,824 attending the Arsenal and Fulham cup final match. There is a stark difference between the support and crowd numbers of with The FA cup final only being in the following year from Mexico.

Chris Lockwood has explained how whilst in Mexico, "it didn't matter to the Mexicans that we were female, it was football".<sup>254</sup> The tournament sponsor was Martini & Rossi, 'who funded travel and accommodation for the six participating teams'.<sup>255</sup> The second unofficial World Cup had its own mascot with the name Xochitl, meaning flower.<sup>256</sup> According to the head of the organising committee for the tournament, Jaime de Haro, the design of the tournament itself was "really going to stress the feminine angle. It's natural, the combination of the two passions of most men around the world: soccer and women".<sup>257</sup> Despite the clear misogynistic and sexist remarks from Haro, the tournament had a visual focal point, Xochitl which 'appeared on a range of merchandising, including magazines and programmes, dolls, t-shirts, badges and bags'.<sup>258</sup> This amount of support and recognition is still a battle each year with women's football tournaments today and yet in 1971 the popularity was huge. The Women's European tournament in 2022 highlighted the growth of popularity with 61% of football fans saying that this was the first time they had watched women's football, and 91% suggesting that they would watch future matches again.<sup>259</sup> Naturally with this increase in support following this tournament there has been huge interest meaning that merchandise has seen an increase in demand. For example items such as football shirts have now seen that 83% of fans would buy a shirt with a female players name on the back, and now 84% of fans are more likely to buy a shirt than after the 2019 Women's World Cup.<sup>260</sup> This demonstrates that having a tournament with

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<sup>253</sup> WOMEN'S SOCCER UNITED. (2014). *FA Women's Cup Facts and Figures 1971 To 2013*. WOMEN'S SOCCER UNITED. <https://www.womenssoccerunited.com/the-fa-womens-cup-match-final-attendances-from-1972-to-2013/>

<sup>254</sup> Taylor, L. (2019, June 8). *From pink goalposts to blue plaques: a history of women's football*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/08/from-pink-goalposts-to-blue-plaques-a-history-of-womens-football>

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> History Extra. (2019). *The 1971 Women's World Cup: game changers?* History Extra. <https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/1971-womens-football-soccer-world-cup-mexico-england-team/>

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> Thorpe, K. (2022). *EURO 2022 LEADS TO RISE IN WOMEN'S SHIRTS SALES*. Footy.com. <https://www.footy.com/blog/statistics/euro-2022-womens-shirt-sales>

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

merchandise and matches available to fans can ensure greater strength in support and backing for future tournaments.

A further element that the 1971 tournament provided for the generations of women's football today, was the experience and opportunity of playing internationally. In 1970 when the first unofficial World Cup took place, it made the newspapers in the UK. In the Glasgow *Sunday Mail* in 1970, the title of the small article was 'Women's World Cup'.<sup>261</sup> This article was a very brief explanation of the tournament which could be down to the a women's football tournament being relatively unknown to the media as it was new.<sup>262</sup> Within the explanation, Britain are mentioned as an entrant into the tournament organised by the 'newly-formed' FIEFF.<sup>263</sup> Before the second unofficial tournament there was already opportunities of women's football appearing in the newspapers of the time regarding the first unofficial Women's World Cup, showing there was a potential of a turning point. What both tournaments have in common was the opportunity to promote women's football as much as the successful men's game, and the potential prospects that financial promoters that were supporting the tournament could bring.<sup>264</sup> Due to these tournaments being one of the first funded and widely popular international women's tournaments demonstrates that there was huge chances to play in front of crowds on an international stage rather than a domestic one. It was careless on both Batt's and the WFA's sides, the politics got in the way of the prospects of there being other successful women's football for the mainstream when the ban on women's football was lifted.<sup>265</sup> Lockwood recalls Harry Batt struggled to get a team to the tournament in the first place due to the politics and that the England representative team did not have anywhere near the same support from home that other teams at the finals had.<sup>266</sup> In 1971, UEFA passed a motion 'in favour of member countries taking control of women's football'.<sup>267</sup> Interestingly, the countries 'that did fully and positively integrate' their women's teams such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Germany are among the World leaders today in the sport.<sup>268</sup> Considering that the FA did not completely integrate the women's team until 1993, serves to highlight the wasted possibilities for the England women's team if they had followed UEFA's recommendations.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Sunday Mail. (1970, March 1). *Women's World Cup*. Sunday Mail.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001752/19700301/242/0027>

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *'Unsuitable for Females': The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 62

<sup>265</sup> Dunn, C. (2022). *'Unsuitable for Females': The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England*. Birlinn General. Page 63

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.* Page 63

<sup>267</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 59

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.* Page 59

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.* Page 59

Domestically there was huge strides made by the WFA, as teams who were part of the inaugural meeting such as the Manchester Corinthians raised much money for charity and amassed large crowds.<sup>270</sup> However on an international front, the WFA were too slow to jump aboard the train that Batt was trying to encourage. The international opportunities created by Batt and the players of both the 1970 and 1971 squad, could have been greater than just in these tournaments. The WFA did not capitalise on the opportunity that the Batt's opened up for them.

Gender stereotypes at the time were still being increasingly fuelled by the prospect of women's football, with the media criticising anything that strayed from the expected. In the *Daily Mirror* there was harsh criticism by referee Ken Caves who described "unladylike" language.<sup>271</sup> Harry Batt also did not help matters when he discussed how their "dressing-room was like a battlefield", due to all the injuries that had been sustained and the "men in white coats administering oxygen".<sup>272</sup> The way in which the media intrinsically linked how the young players were playing unnaturally and absurdly to the expectations with the multiple injuries that were accumulated from the tournament, gives women's football a terrible image. Obviously, the WFA would have seen these negative perceptions making their way through the British media up and down the country tarnishing the goals they were trying to achieve. Although the tournament was a huge success in Mexico, the euphoric sense did not make its way overseas to the British Isles meaning the WFA had to act in order to stop women's football coming to a dramatic halt. Patricia Gregory suggested that the steps the WFA took with the 1971 squad were to "protect everyone" and this is clear evidence that there was some motive behind this decision.<sup>273</sup> In the long run going to the tournament in Mexico for women's football is perceived as a huge achievement, however in the short term the idea of women's football being accepted was still a while off being welcomed. The WFA has to be given credit for still being able to keep the light alive for the sport due to the press coming down so hard on the players from 1971 and women playing what they still classed as a men's only sport.

In contrast to the view that attending the 1971 tournament was a miscalculation, the potential that previous tournaments provided meant that the second unofficial World Cup may have had an even bigger impact on the future. Despite the ban on women's football and the FA's protests in 1970, bus driver and secretary of Chiltern Valley, Harry Batt assembled a team to attend

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<sup>270</sup> Clarke, G. (2019). *SoccerWomen: The Icons, Rebels, Stars, and Trailblazers Who Transformed the Beautiful Game*. Bold Type Books. Page 25

<sup>271</sup> Taylor, F. (1971, August 25). *Well, the girls will be girls*. *Daily Mirror*.  
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000560/19710825/239/0028?browse=False>

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:09:56

the Coppa del Mondo.<sup>274</sup> This tournament held in Novara, Aosta and Turin in the November of 1970 was a turning point for women's football engagement.<sup>275</sup> Sue Lopez competed in this tournament and is credited in scoring a hat-trick, after the tournament she was signed to Roma.<sup>276</sup> Due to this tournament encouraging much potential for players to be scouted and to play internationally was starting to transform the game. In the WFA minutes from 1970, Joan Briggs, the acting captain of the squad that travelled to Italy, had received a small sum of money from the BBC for a recording she took in Milan whilst there.<sup>277</sup> It continues on discussing how Briggs returned the money after fearing the repercussions of the WFA, but it reminds the meeting further down on the manuscript that "Mr and Mrs Batt had been allowed to accept an invitation from the Italian Federation to take their team.... To represent England".<sup>278</sup> Therefore, in Batt's mind he may have just thought that the next tournament to Mexico, representing England would equally be accepted by the WFA as he had done it before. The last tournament organised by the FIEFF, which dropped European from its title to the ambitious International Federation of Feminin Football (FIFF), was in 1972 ended up being much less successful.<sup>279</sup> The tournament in between these very different events was Mexico 1971, which showed huge potential with Germany, Spain and Switzerland all ready to host the tournament too.<sup>280</sup> There were many firsts for women's football within this tournament with those who could make it into the stadiums to watch the match had the chance to buy memorabilia and each team had their own dedicated publicist.<sup>281</sup>

Linking back to Sue Lopez's time playing in Italy, the next player to achieve such a feat was Kerry Davis. Davis was scouted during the Mundialito tournament held in Italy by Lazio.<sup>282</sup> This opportunity was not until over a decade after the 1971 tournament, and could have been a potential for players in the 1971 competition if there had been better publicity within the press and if it had been in a different country with stronger links to women's football. Considering that Italy was becoming a professional to semi-professional country for women's football during the 1970 tournament, according to Leah Caleb, it was giving girls an opportunity to play on a big stage in front of crowds interested in the women's game.<sup>283</sup> Referring back to the

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<sup>274</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Page 92

<sup>275</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 97

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.* Page 97 - 98

<sup>277</sup> Women's Football Association. (1970, August 1). *Women's Football Association Executive Committee meeting minutes*. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/1), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 96

<sup>280</sup> Williams, J. (2021). *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History. Page 103

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* Page 105

<sup>282</sup> K. Davis, interview, March 6, 2023. 00:08:22

<sup>283</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023. 00:09:25

WFA, Caleb continues to suggest that there was no doubt in her mind that decisions that were made within the WFA “had an effect on the speed of which women's football has progressed or not progressed”.<sup>284</sup> The combination of the negative impact the girls who returned received with a ban meant that the previous experience of tournaments run by the FIEFF and the FIFF were undermined and forgotten about, slowing down the progress altogether which may have just seen huge increases in the global sport.

Perhaps a more complex point of view but the pathway to a successful women’s footballing world, may have been more accessible if other female players were more welcoming of players involved with Batt’s teams. On both sides of the WFA and 1971 squad fall out, there is a sense of resentment. Patricia Gregory explained how she “got furious”, with the squad being reunited on the One Show due to the first official team of 1972 being overshadowed.<sup>285</sup> Moreover according to Gregory, Liz Deighan had responded to Jean Williams’ Twitter post criticising her support and comments on the ‘lost Lionesses’, ultimately leading to Williams taking it down.<sup>286</sup> Considering that these protests were recent, demonstrates how on the WFA side, things have not changed. A positive development that Gregory has been involved in recently is collecting and assigning the legacy numbers of all players that represented England ladies.<sup>287</sup> The aim of this is to gift each player an England cap with their number on it, the first and seemingly last at this current time was given to the first 11 players of the 1972 squad at England’s match against the USA at Wembley in 2022.<sup>288</sup> Interestingly, the 1971 squad were also invited to attend the match, believing that they would also have their time to be appreciated on the pitch in front of a sold out crowd but it never happened.<sup>289</sup> Jill Brader, a player from the 1971 squad, described how the team were invited to Wembley and were given lunch in a private viewing box, where they watched the 1972 squad get paraded around the pitch.<sup>290</sup> The squad from 1971 felt and hoped that they would be next up to have their time of appreciation and yet they were not.<sup>291</sup> Brader explained how the players all clapped out of respect for the 1972 squad.<sup>292</sup> Caleb, Lockwood and Sayell also backed this point up that they clapped and showed huge support for the 1972 squad when they walked round that pitch.<sup>293</sup> A point that Lockwood makes is that “any woman footballer that has got a problem with a

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<sup>284</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:10:46

<sup>285</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:14:42

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.* 00:15:38

<sup>287</sup> BBC. (2022). *England women: Legacy numbers introduced to mark 50th anniversary of first international*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/63669450>

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> J. Brader, *interview*, March 18, 2023. 00:21:58

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* 00:22:07

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* 00:22:07

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.* 00:32:13

<sup>293</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:57:11

woman footballer... needs to speak to herself”, due to the battles that their generation in particular had to go through in order to get where they are today.<sup>294</sup> This quote in itself epitomizes the fact that unfortunately politics and personal issues have got in the way of the fact that women can play football now on FA pitches and to crowds that support and want to see them. Women who may have wanted to play during the 50 year ban from the FA did not have the chance to play to the extent that even players under the WFA had. Therefore, should the WFA and the 1971 squad just be grateful that both generations have achieved something that has impacted the game for women today?

Finally the biggest hindrance to the progress for a successful England women’s team and potentially domestic leagues, was stopping Harry Batt and his vision for what women’s football could be. The Captain of the 1971 squad Carol Wilson described Batt as a “visionary” for women’s football.<sup>295</sup> Leah Caleb reinforces this idea suggesting that Batt “really was a visionary and a maverick” and “his belief in the women’s game at that time was incredible”.<sup>296</sup> On January 1971, in the Luton News, June Batt is quoted as suggesting that she was “certain that in the future there will be full-time professional ladies’ team” and that they were “hoping to be one of the first”.<sup>297</sup> Due to Harry and June Batt being banned from the WFA and Chiltern Valley being banned also, his potential to continue to promote opportunities was halted.<sup>298</sup> The Batt’s son Keith told the BBC that after the ban, he only saw tears in his father’s eyes a handful of times and that was one of them.<sup>299</sup> The WFA’s ban on Batt “didn’t just hurt him, they set women’s football back 30 years”.<sup>300</sup> Leah Caleb believed that the WFA wanted the same thing that the Batt’s and the 1971 squad had, and due to this took action to remove the “modern networker of the 70s”.<sup>301</sup>

On the other hand, Patricia Gregory stands by the WFA decision and reasoning to ban Chiltern Valley and the Batt’s, due to Batt’s previous tournament in 1970 in Italy where they were dubbed an ‘England’ team.<sup>302</sup> In FA minutes from June 1971, it was decided that because of this any players from Chiltern Valley that wanted to continue playing could so long as they played under a WFA team not associated with Chiltern Valley so that they could be treated

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<sup>294</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:52:28

<sup>295</sup> BBC. (2022). *Lionesses: Former England player says recognition is overdue*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-62352222>

<sup>296</sup> Malone, R. *The hidden history of women’s football in England*. Sports Gazette. <https://sportsgazette.co.uk/the-hidden-history-of-womens-football-in-england/>

<sup>297</sup> Malone, R. *The hidden history of women’s football in England*. Sports Gazette. <https://sportsgazette.co.uk/the-hidden-history-of-womens-football-in-england/>

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:11:07

<sup>302</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:37:53



fairly.<sup>303</sup> As previously mentioned Sue Lopez suggested that the official England squad was set up “partly to negate Harry Batt’s unofficial England XI trips”.<sup>304</sup> Before Harry Batt’s touring team, the equivalent feats of such a team was the Dick Kerr ladies.<sup>305</sup> In 1937, the Dick Kerr Ladies had a run of over 200 games without defeat and became acknowledged as World Champions after winning a match against Edinburgh Ladies.<sup>306</sup> Although women’s football was starting to find foundations through the WFA, Harry Batt and Chiltern Valley were similar to the Dick Kerr Ladies in the respect that they had to take advantage of international opportunities as there was still very limited domestic chances for women’s football at the time. The WFA could have built on the success of Batt’s touring teams getting advice and support from Batt himself, however by banning his involvement in the WFA’s progression meant that the experience and connections from previous teams and tournaments slowed down the growth of woman’s football.

Additionally the support that the ‘England’ team received whilst in Mexico and the prospect of getting their team on a worldwide stage meant that they had achieved feats that no other England squad had before. One element that Batt may have not foreseen, as well as members of the squad, is the unfortunate representation of the squad in the British media, meaning that the WFA had to make a stand in order to prevent the still looming view that women should not play the sport. On the other hand however, Batt had already taken a team to the first unofficial World Cup tournament which was relatively successful and on the surface seemed like a new lease of life for the women’s game. Members of the 1971 squad even more so today, believe that the politics should be set aside and that there should just be a celebration that women play and played football due to the position the Lionesses are in today in comparison to 1971. Lastly, the biggest impact on international women’s football in the 1970’s was Harry Batt. Batt’s ability to see a big opportunity to get women’s football on a large stage gave women’s football a turning point for the future generations of the sport. Despite Batt’s ban, his influence on the players from 1971 and the legacy he had in pushing the WFA to make changes more swiftly in the women’s game, is one of the reasons as a country there should be more recognition for this man.

To conclude, it is undeniable that the 1971 second unofficial Women’s World Cup had a positive impact on women’s football. Despite the WFA taking charge over and opening further

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<sup>303</sup> Women’s Football Association. (1971, June 5). Women’s Football Association Annual General meeting. The British Library. (Department of manuscripts, Add MS 89306/1/2), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>304</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 59

<sup>305</sup> Doble, A. (2015). *The secret history of women's football*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-33064421>

<sup>306</sup> Community Rail Network. (2021). *Community Rail Lancashire project aims to commemorate historic women's football team*. Community Rail Network. <https://communityrail.org.uk/dick-kerrs-ladies-football>

opportunities for women's football, internationally, the 1971 squad achieved much more. The 1966 men's victory aided not only women's football, but English football as a whole. By Batt having connections with Ted Hart and those who were supportive of a Women's World Cup being held in England, demonstrates the lasting impression and confidence that was placed upon him.<sup>307</sup> Moreover, a women's team also having support from the likes of Bert Trautmann and having a tournament on a bigger stage, validates further the potential that women's football had to progress from as early as 1957 onwards.<sup>308</sup> Furthermore the history of women's football in the form of the Dick Kerr Ladies highlights how women could attract crowds higher than the male matches, meaning that support was already there, it just needed to be re-established.<sup>309</sup> Chiltern Valley, themselves a member of the WFA, knew the opportunities available to them within England in comparison to abroad and so did not feel that they had anything to lose by attending the tournament in 1971. Following on from both chapter 1 and 2, other external factors have to be considered to understand the slow growth on women's football that was pre and post the Batt's and WFA's control.

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<sup>307</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

<sup>308</sup> Hoffmann, E & Nendza, J. (2007). *Damenfußball in der Verbotszeit*. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.  
<https://www.bpb.de/themen/sport/graue-spielzeit/65065/damenfussball-in-der-verbotszeit/>

<sup>309</sup> Youngs, I. *The lost lionesses - England's forgotten teenage football trailblazers*. BBC Sport.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/extra/LNoYd7se8m/the-lost-lionesses>

## Chapter 3: Off the pitch – Other external impacts to women’s football

Aside from both the WFA and the squads associated with them, including the 1971 team, there are a number of other external factors which have altered the growth of the female footballing world which is what this final chapter *off the pitch* focuses on. Today Women’s football is one of the fastest growing sports in the world and naturally the alumni associated with the sport are mainly to credit.<sup>310</sup> Another potential influence has been external factors such as the Olympic female world, politics, the heritage sector representing women’s football and the amount of support or lack of support to areas such as grassroots facilities for young girls. Due to many fans of the sport today being unaware of the history of the game 50 years prior due to it being unrecognised by the FA, it has meant that it has taken until more recently to have come to the forefront.<sup>311</sup> In more recent times women’s football is seeing records being broken, many barriers being torn down and new partnerships being struck, resulting in the rapid growth of the game.<sup>312</sup> This includes having some male allies within the football world as well as other sporting worlds. On the other hand only since the successes in women’s football has the heritage sector started to showcase the history of Women’s football, for example the National Football Museum finally received funding in 2017 to “curate and display the largest collection of women’s football-related artefacts”.<sup>313</sup> On the surface this is sign of huge progression in the celebration of the sport, but why did it take so long and the discussion of how realistic this change was will be considered? As a consequence of this lack of representation in the public and heritage sector, mainstream television is where role models could be found but it was not until 1989 when Channel 4 started to provide regular coverage of women’s football.<sup>314</sup> Today it can be seen that broadcasting women’s football on traditional and digital platforms now provides a significant growth of opportunity with “broadcast income currently accounting for an average of 6% of revenue for clubs and 18% of revenue for leagues that were surveyed”.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> BBC Sport (2022, June 23). *BBC Football* [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/BBCSport/status/1540008027251777537>

<sup>311</sup> Munro, J. (2022). *The Lost Lionesses: Pioneering Women’s Football In 1971*. The People’s Friend.

<https://www.thepeoplesfriend.co.uk/2022/08/06/the-lost-lionesses-pioneering-womens-football-in-1971/>

<sup>312</sup> UEFA. (2022). *The Business Case for Women’s Football*. UEFA.

<https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/news/0278-15e1359d73bf-0abdd5cc60ba-1000--the-business-case-for-women-s-football/>

<sup>313</sup> Adams, G.K. Museums Association. (2017). *Lost history of women’s football to be told thanks to Wolfson grant*. Museums Association. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2017/01/23012017-wolfson-fund-awards-4m/#>

<sup>314</sup> Doable, A. (2015). *The secret history of women’s football*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-33064421>

<sup>315</sup> FIFA. (2021). *FIFA publishes first-ever comprehensive analysis of the elite women’s football landscape*. FIFA. <https://www.fifa.com/media-releases/fifa-publishes-first-ever-comprehensive-analysis-of-the-elite-women-s-football-l>

Unfortunately due to the lack of public awareness until as recently as the 2022 Euro win, it does have to be considered that other aspects aside from the 1971 squad and the WFA have influenced the progression of female football that we see today. For example, films such as *Bend it like Beckham* have had a huge influence on the way that young girls from many different cultures perceive women's football.<sup>316</sup> The 2002 film is still one of the highest grossing football related films ever and has left a legacy on the next generation of female footballers.<sup>317</sup>

Firstly, the renewed interest in the 1971 squad seems to be due to a romanticised view of the underdogs and as now a usurper of the official 1972 squad. In 2019 the televised reunion of the 1971 squad on the One Show on BBC 1, brought to light the story of the team.<sup>318</sup> Popular history is an explanation as to how there has been a shift in interest towards the second unofficial tournament, as the narrative entices the public and brings a new found audience to the team.<sup>319</sup> As romantic underdogs, the story of the 1971 squad has now made it to the forefront of the continually growing women's game.<sup>320</sup> An opportunity that presented itself within this resurface of the story for some of the 1971 squad, in their meeting of the current women's Lionesses and their manager Sarina Wiegman.<sup>321</sup> Leah Caleb, Gill Sayell and Chris Lockwood have reminisced about this meeting and describe how it was a huge privilege meeting them and that they take it as a great compliment that they had the chance to meet them.<sup>322</sup> Patricia Gregory counteracts how the popularity of the 1971 squad has meant they have become "usurpers" of the 1972 official team.<sup>323</sup> In present day, the depiction of history is facing battles to ensure that a narratological perspective is more focused on, whilst still aligning with the social constructs of popular historical writing in various genres, than solely a reflection of truthfulness.<sup>324</sup> History can have different impacts to individuals and does not have to be just in the 'past', meaning that the tournament of 1971 fits the current social climate to some now, because of the relatively unbelievable narrative of the players coming to light as a

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<sup>316</sup> H. Richardson, G. Virtue, H. Wong, A. Catterall & S. Wardell. (2022, May 22). *TV tonight: the 20-year legacy of Bend It Like Beckham*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2022/may/22/tv-tonight-bend-it-like-beckham-20-years-on-bbc-three>

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> BBC. (2019). *Women's World Cup: 1971 'lost lionesses' squad tracked down after 48 years*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/48771268>

<sup>319</sup> Word Press. (2015). *Continental dispatches - Academic vs. Popular History*. Word Press. <https://continentaldispatches.wordpress.com/2015/03/06/academic-vs-popular-history/>

<sup>320</sup> Word Press. *Romanticizing history*. Word Press. <https://historyromanticized.wordpress.com/introduction/>

<sup>321</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:35:44

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* 00:36:55

<sup>323</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 01:14:05

<sup>324</sup> Jaeger, S. (2015). Popular historical writing from a narratological perspective. In S. Popp, J. Schumann, & M. Hannig (Eds.), *Commercialised History: Popular History Magazines in Europe: Approaches to a Historico-Cultural Phenomenon as the Basis for History Teaching* (NED-New edition, pp. 113–146). Peter Lang AG. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv9hj7qx.7> Page 114

romanticised history.<sup>325</sup> Intrinsically, this attracts the public to a stimulating and engaging piece of history in not only forms of writing, but through media coverage like television and newspaper articles today.<sup>326</sup> In the news coverage at the time the main focus on the girls from 1971 was the injuries they sustained with the *Evening Telegraph* focusing on Jill Stockley and her black eye from the game against Argentina.<sup>327</sup> In comparison, news articles today often include the personal narratives in the form of positive recollections rather than just the focus on the negatives. For example in 2019, *The Telegraph* allowed members of the squad to discuss amongst themselves their collective memory of the tournament, with Chris Lockwood reminiscing about how they thought there must have been someone famous on the plane the team arrived on, due to the reception the public awaiting the players were giving them.<sup>328</sup> But as they came off the plane in Mexico, to their surprise the crowd was for them.<sup>329</sup> The 50 year difference between the newspaper articles demonstrates how there has been a stark transformation in what has formed popular history and is deemed acceptable. Furthermore, this year has marked the release of the documentary *Copa 71*, a film about the tournament narrated by Sarina Williams, Alex Morgan and players from all the different participating countries.<sup>330</sup> Rachel Ramsey, the director, suggests that the film “is reflective of the attitudes at the time and how those attitudes continued”.<sup>331</sup> With the use of much oral interviews and material culture, the 1971 World Cup has been given a new found perspective, that of emotion and admiration which has never been seen before. The romanticised depiction of the second unofficial World Cup tournament and the England representatives that went, has altered the perception of the squad to the public and given them a heroic aura to their story that is now being retold.

One long term impact that the WFA can take some credit for was that their generation of players became key figures in coaching and encouraging grassroots football. St Helens

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<sup>325</sup> Williams, J., Compton, J., & Scarlett, B. (2019). *Sporting reunions, contemporary collections and collective biographies: A case study of Harry Batt's 1971 England team*. *Sport in History*, 39(2), 229-250.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1592771> Page 231

<sup>326</sup> Jaeger, S. (2015). *Popular historical writing from a narratological perspective*. In S. Popp, J. Schumann, & M. Hannig (Eds.), *Commercialised History: Popular History Magazines in Europe: Approaches to a Historico-Cultural Phenomenon as the Basis for History Teaching* (NED-New edition, pp. 113–146). Peter Lang AG.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv9hj7qx.7> Page 115

<sup>327</sup> Coventry Evening Telegraph (1971, September 8). *Ouch... Soccer is fun really*. Coventry Evening Telegraph. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000769/19710908/438/0031>

<sup>328</sup> Steafel, E. (2019, June 8). *England's lost lionesses: the 1971 women's squad who broke the rules and became World Cup heroes*. The Telegraph. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/englands-lost-lionesses-1971-womens-squad-broke-rules-became/>

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>330</sup> Young, I. (2024). *Copa 71: Film shows record-breaking women's World Cup*. BBC News.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-68422607>

<sup>331</sup> Hall, M. (2023, September 8). *Copa 71: when 112,500 fans packed out the unofficial Women's World Cup final*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2023/sep/08/copa-71-when-112500-fans-packed-out-the-unofficial-womens-world-cup-final>

Ladies was formed in 1919 from the various St Helens munitionettes sides.<sup>332</sup> The team quickly grew in popularity, regularly attracted crowds of 10,000 and was the team the Dick Kerr's faced at Goodison Park with the attendance 53,000 spectators.<sup>333</sup> Due to the women's ban in 1921, the opportunity for teams like St Helen's to progress and continue was reduced massively, and eventually the name of St Helen's seemed to fade again after the second World War.<sup>334</sup> In 1976, Liz Deighan set up the new St Helen's team.<sup>335</sup> Deighan explained how she was actually unaware of the history of the club when she originally set it up, not knowing there was even a team before this one, saying she thought that they "were the first St. Helens team".<sup>336</sup> Another team that Deighan coached and set up was a team originally called Newton Ladies in 1989.<sup>337</sup> In 1991 they changed the name to Knowsley United, and today this team is known as Liverpool ladies.<sup>338</sup> Deighan also was the first coach and manager of England Ladies under 21's.<sup>339</sup> The progression of the teams that Deighan helped to develop into a hugely supported and established club in English football is a huge achievement and demonstrates the potential that coaching and teaching gives to the progress of women's football. Another well known player under the WFA that became an immense influence on the development of the women's game is Hope Powell. Powell has been "recognised for her outstanding contribution to the performance, professionalisation and perception of women's football in the UK".<sup>340</sup> Powell not only made her debut for England aged 16, and represented her country on 66 occasions but also "was the first woman to achieve the UEFA Pro Licence, the highest football coaching qualification available".<sup>341</sup> Powell was appointed as the first ever full-time National Coach of the England Women's team in June 1998, being not only the youngest ever England coach but first female England coach.<sup>342</sup> Since the Lionesses' win in the Women's European championship finals in 2022, there has been a huge boost in the numbers of young girls getting involved in

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<sup>332</sup> Heale, J. (2021, March 28). *St Helens' Lizzy Ashcroft has a place women's football history*. St Helens star. <https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/19193061.story-st-helens-lizzy-ashcrofts-special-place-history-womens-football/>

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> Heale, J. (2021, March 28). *St Helens' Lizzy Ashcroft has a place women's football history*. St Helens star. <https://www.sthelensstar.co.uk/news/19193061.story-st-helens-lizzy-ashcrofts-special-place-history-womens-football/>

<sup>335</sup> L. Deighan, '*Liz Deighan interview*'. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:11:30

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.* 00:29:53

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.* 00:12:18

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* 00:12:50

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.* 00:12:07

<sup>340</sup> BBC. (2022). *Hope Powell: Former England coach awarded honorary doctorate*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-62334390>

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> National Football Museum. *Hope Powell*. National Football Museum. <https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/halloffame/hope-powell/>

grassroots football.<sup>343</sup> The main hinderance to the development of the women's game has ultimately come down to lack of funds into the sport. However UEFA has pledged an extra 2.75m euros (£2.4m) will be made available for women's football projects per year, funded by profits from the men's European Championship.<sup>344</sup> If funding had been made available a lot sooner the potential for the experience from ex-players of the sport may have allowed for huge popularity a lot sooner, due to the impact that players from under the WFA had in the women's game.

On the other hand, there has been a lack of representation in the heritage sector of women's football, so there has been a huge gap in the role models of the game for young girls to aspire to. Heritage can "improve personal wellbeing, by helping us understand our past, our individual and communal identity and help us connect with the places where we live".<sup>345</sup> There has been a sense of under representation of women across a wide scale especially in sporting feats.<sup>346</sup> The National Football Museum made a pledge in 2020 to increase women's football representation to 50% of all its displays.<sup>347</sup> In 2017, the museum was given a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to help purchase a private women's football collection, pieced together by Chris Unger, a US coach who died in 2015.<sup>348</sup> Despite these pledges, the museum itself admitted that in 2023, they had "limited selection of memorabilia from stars of the Barclays Women's Super League, both past and present".<sup>349</sup> It was not until September 2023, until the museum and the WSL collaborated to "increase the representation of women's football memorabilia at the venue".<sup>350</sup> With a new found importance in representing women's football in heritage properties like museums, it provides a new generations of players and fans with the opportunity to learn and appreciate those that came before them. The paradigm of memory in

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<sup>343</sup> Hall, R. (2022, July 3). 'We're buzzing': grassroots women's football teams look forward to Euros. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/jul/03/grassroots-womens-football-teams-euros-2022-england-host>

<sup>344</sup> BBC. (2018). *UEFA promises 50% funding rise for women's football*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/45862373>

<sup>345</sup> Historic England. *Heritage and Society*. Historic England. <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-society/>

<sup>346</sup> Anderson N, Robinson DG, Verhagen E, et al. (2023) Under-representation of women is alive and well in sport and exercise medicine: what it looks like and what we can do about it. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 9 (2), 1-5. doi: 10.1136/bmjsem-2023-001606. Page 1

<sup>347</sup> Wrack, S. (2020, December 3). 'Big bold statement': National Football Museum's path to gender equality. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/dec/03/national-football-museum-gender-equality-womens-football>

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> National Football Museum. (2023). *TEAMING UP WITH THE BARCLAYS WSL TO INCREASE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL REPRESENTATION*. National Football Museum.

<https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/news/barclays-wsl-collaboration/>

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

the late twentieth century has been widely studied and sporting memory can unite and divide people due to social constraints and collective memories differing at times.<sup>351</sup>

Sporting memory has now brought a sense of feeling belonging to a social group therefore providing 'heritagisation' factors, by providing "a link between the past and the future" constituting a place for experimentation.<sup>352</sup> By opening up the floor for women's footballers to share their collective memories it gives them a voice to share their stories to future generations of the sport and perhaps allows an opportunity of collective understanding of their shared struggles and experiences.<sup>353</sup> Another method that helps to explain shared collective memory and to help understand women's football is through photographs or physical objects.<sup>354</sup> Images taken of women's football teams and published in newspapers meant that "such images may also have played a part in stimulating an interest in women's football elsewhere in the country".<sup>355</sup> Portsmouth Ladies are an example of this, because within the final years of the First World War, photographs of women's football teams were eventually just a "simple visual shorthand employed by newspapers to illustrate the rapid changes in wartime society".<sup>356</sup> Today, images like these are used as a way of celebrating the teams of the past, rather than a scapegoat for society.<sup>357</sup> The way in which the heritage of female footballers has been transformed to take more notice and care in the way that history is portrayed, so that now upcoming footballing females have new role models to look up to, that may have been overlooked previously. However there is still plenty to do, the focus of most of women's heritage has solely been surrounding women who are of white and middle class status, disregarding those from other ethnic groups, disabled individuals and the LGBTQIA+ community.<sup>358</sup> Furthermore this highlights that women's football can have a multitude of meanings to women, but without the positive impact of heritage representation, it will remain underrepresented.

In addition to slow progression being down to underrepresentation, there has also been a lot of negative representation of and made by other female athletes, which may have tarnished

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<sup>351</sup> Violette, L., & Attali, M. (2018). Sporting memory and its heritagisation: The example of roland-garros. *French Cultural Studies*, 29(3), 279-289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957155818773940> Page 279

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.* Page 280

<sup>353</sup> National Football Museum. (2020). *Sporting memories: Hidden History talk*. National Football Museum. <https://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/whatson/sporting-memories-hidden-history/>

<sup>354</sup> Jackson, A. (2019). Gender, photography and women's football in England: the Portsmouth Ladies FC, 1916–1918. *Sport in History*, 39(4), 376–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1677264> Page 378

<sup>355</sup> Jackson, A. (2019). Gender, photography and women's football in England: the Portsmouth Ladies FC, 1916–1918. *Sport in History*, 39(4), 376–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1677264>. Page 385

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.* Page 386

<sup>357</sup> Butterworth, D. (2018). *Women: Societies Favorite Scapegoat*. Medium. <https://medium.com/the-sensible-soapbox/women-societies-favorite-scapegoat-7a92add51b1>

<sup>358</sup> Gray, M. (2021). *Where are all the women?*. Museum Association. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/features/2021/05/where-are-the-women/>



the image and popularity of female football. Unsurprisingly even from the very beginning women involved with sport were seen as the 'other sex'; the outsiders, the new- or late-comers who, if they were given permission to at all, "could take part in 'suitable' forms of exercise and sport".<sup>359</sup> The Olympics are an example of how there has been slow progress in women's representation in the games, as in the first Olympic Games in 1896 women were not admitted to the contests.<sup>360</sup> In 1900, without the consent of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), women took part 'officially' in tennis and golf competitions but 'unofficially' in at least eleven sports at the Paris Olympics.<sup>361</sup> Even as late as 1953, the renowned philosopher Buytendijk commented on the subject of women's football saying that, "football as a game is essentially a demonstration of masculinity... no one has ever been successful in getting women to play football".<sup>362</sup> Despite Buytendijk's judgements, since the 1950s female athletes, have seen greater access to more and more sports which were formerly confined as men's domains.<sup>363</sup> Despite improvements in the ability for women to take part in sporting competitions, controversies such as doping allegations and performing with non-conformity to the gender stereotypes, have meant negative media is shone on the idea of the female athlete. For example the doping of East Germany from 1976, although not public until many years later, is an example of a country taking advantage of its athletes creating negative publicity to both its male and female athletes.<sup>364</sup> Andreas Krieger, formally known as Heidi Krieger, described how the athletes were told they were "taking vitamin pills that would compensate" for the lack of nutrition.<sup>365</sup> Krieger explained "through administering these pills to me, Heidi was killed and she's not there anymore".<sup>366</sup> Another example of doping that impacted the female athlete reputation was in a newspaper article published by the *Birmingham Daily Post* with the title, 'life ban for drug-taking athletes'.<sup>367</sup> Within the article they name seven eastern European athletes that tested positive for drug substances who all held commendable titles in the Olympic games.<sup>368</sup> With the media being one of the most influential forms of socialisation in generating gender values today, both discussions of all the female athletes can be perceived

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<sup>359</sup> Pfister, G. (2010). *Women in sport - gender relations and future perspectives*. *Sport in Society*, 13(2), 234-248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430903522954> Page 234

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.* Page 236

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.* Page 236

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.* Page 234

<sup>363</sup> Pfister, G. (2010). *Women in sport - gender relations and future perspectives*. *Sport in Society*, 13(2), 234-248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430903522954>. Page 234

<sup>364</sup> Costello, M. (2013). *East Germany athletes were 'chemical field tests'*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/athletics/22269445>

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> Birmingham Daily Post. (1979, October 26). *Life ban for drug-taking athletes*. Birmingham Daily Post. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002135/19791026/436/0023>

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

as creating a sense of negativity for essentially cheating.<sup>369</sup> Today there is still a looming reminder that while women can now take up men's sports they still adjust to the norms and values which dominate the sport, and that men's interest in "typical women's' physical activities is negligible".<sup>370</sup> Due to the tarnishing views of woman athletes even aside from football, the general public may have been swayed in potentially seeing women's football and other sportswomen as being cheaters, unable to perform without drugs and generally that women should not take part in sport. This is a main external reason as to why women in sport more generally have taken a long time to make it to the forefront of the public's viewing, and even today there is still a huge pressure on keeping coverage positive.

Furthermore, the effect of a change in politics started a swift change in the attitudes towards women and their roles in society. By the 1960s and 1970s, led by the US, "second-wave feminism had reached the UK's shores, and gains were slowly being made".<sup>371</sup> The contraceptive pill was launched in 1961, however was not made available to unmarried women before 1976.<sup>372</sup> 1964 marked the end of a thirteen year Conservative hold as Labour secured victory led by Harold Wilson.<sup>373</sup> The Wilson government was a new opportunity for women to be heard for the first time in history and in addition they would "outlaw capital punishment and decriminalise homosexuality".<sup>374</sup> In 1966 Labour and Wilson won a snap election and in 1967 they introduced the Abortion Act, a huge new step for women's rights.<sup>375</sup> Although these steps opened up new opportunities for women in England, the biggest turning point came from a strike in 1968 by 850 female mechanists from Dagenham's Ford factory, that went on for three weeks regarding equal pay.<sup>376</sup> The Dagenham women were sewing machinists who made seat covers for the many cars produced by Ford, and eventually because of the strikes Ford had to stop production of cars due to not having the seats, showcasing how important the women's jobs were.<sup>377</sup> "Working women throughout the UK, benefited from the Dagenham women's strike, which was a precursor to the Equal Pay Act of 1970".<sup>378</sup> The possibility that if the equal pay act had not come in 1970, the WFA may not have been able to pursue its aim

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<sup>369</sup> Trolan, E. J. (2013). *The Impact of the Media on Gender Inequality within Sport*. Social and Behavioral Sciences, 91, 215-227. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.420> Page 215

<sup>370</sup> Pfister, G. (2010). *Women in sport - gender relations and future perspectives*. Sport in Society, 13(2), 234-248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430903522954> Pages 239 - 240

<sup>371</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Page 79

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.* Page 79

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.* Page 79

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.* Page 80

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.* Page 80

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.* Page 80

<sup>377</sup> Napikoski, L. (2019). *The Dagenham Women's Strike of 1968*. ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-dagenham-womens-strike-of-1968-3528932>

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

to lift the ban on women's football. On the other hand, the equal pay act has also been much of a hinderance for women's footballers today. Whilst legislation regarding equal pay for equal work has been in place for over 50 years in the UK, much like the ban on women's football has been lifted for over 50 years now, many professional sporting enterprises continue to offer astonishing differences in pay for men and women.<sup>379</sup> There is a huge difference between the men and women's average earning in the top flight of English football with men, on average earning £2,800,000 a year compared to women on average earning £30,000 a year.<sup>380</sup> Political advancements at the reintroduction of the women's game were crucial in its development as it provided more evidence legally that women had more rights and opportunities than ever before, bringing women's football back and removing the ban. However, there is still much that needs to be done today to give women the opportunity to earn enough to play for a career much like the men can, to continue the future of the sport for more young girls.

A further reason as to why the growth of women's football as a competitive sport took a long period of time to develop was due to the delay of efforts by the FA and FIFA. In 1971, UEFA recommended that the national associations should start to "recognise their national women's game and develop an international structure to support its development".<sup>381</sup> In 1988, FIFA held its first women's football tournament, "delicately titled the Women's Invitation Tournament", where England were not invited to the test run for any future World Cups.<sup>382</sup> By FIFA not taking more interest in other women's teams until their first official tournament, meant that there was a lack of opportunity for other teams to gain experience and develop more quickly. The major change in the structure and organisation of the sport, that UEFA were encouraging did not actually occur until 1993, when the FA took over the governance of the women's game from Women's FA.<sup>383</sup> Following the FA's take over, ten years on in 2003 and only 10% of the football participation in England was by females.<sup>384</sup> Ironically any academic attention regarding women's football in England has only recently been more focused.<sup>385</sup> Potentially this could be due to the fact that by 2002, "football had become the most popular female sport in the UK

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<sup>379</sup> Ovaisi, H. (2022). *Women's football: Equal pay for equal play? So Legal*.  
<https://www.solegal.co.uk/insights/womens-football-equal-pay-equal-play>

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>381</sup> Skillen, F., Byrne, H., Carrier, J., & James, G. (2022). '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. *Sport in History*, 42(1), 49-75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2021.2025415> Page 56

<sup>382</sup> Clarke, G. (2019). *SoccerWomen: The Icons, Rebels, Stars, and Trailblazers Who Transformed the Beautiful Game*. Bold Type Books. Page 5

<sup>383</sup> Bell, B. (2019). Women's Euro 2005 a 'watershed' for women's football in England and a new era for the game? *Sport in History*, 39(4), 445-461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1684985> Page 447

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid*. Page 447

<sup>385</sup> Caudwell, J., Holland, S., & Scraton, S. (2005). 'BEND IT LIKE PATEL': Centring 'Race', Ethnicity and Gender in Feminist Analysis of Women's Football in England. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 40(1), 71-88. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690205052169> Page 72

(replacing netball) with 61,667 affiliated players”, getting more interest taken upon the sport.<sup>386</sup> By the FA not being as fast to take over the women’s game as suggested by UEFA it meant that there was time lost in the potential advancements of women’s football especially in England. Another global issue that both national associations and FIFA are to blame for is the clear divide in the ability of the teams. When the England Lionesses beat Latvia 20-0, there was an obvious split between the level of international team performances within women’s football, and demonstrates how progression for the sport with so many countries lacking in the same resources would be difficult.<sup>387</sup> Wrack suggests that the gap between the teams is in fact getting bigger.<sup>388</sup> She continues to suggest that this “is not a result of some countries investing and some not... but of the rapid but uneven development of international women’s football”.<sup>389</sup> Even in the WSL today there are big divides in the opportunities for the 12 teams in the league.<sup>390</sup> Reading, the team relegated from the WSL in this year’s season 2022/23, are the only club not to be associated with a premier league team and had the lowest budget in the league, meaning they really struggled to compete with the likes of the top teams.<sup>391</sup> These more current realisations all stem back to the delayed interest paid by FIFA and the FA, showing how even today there is a lot of work to do in order to allow women’s football to be competitive for all.

Moreover, the missing female role models for women’s football meant that it was harder for those playing to find someone to look up to in the same situation. “Historically only around 2% of national newspaper sports pages have been devoted to women’s sport”.<sup>392</sup> This emphasises how it was hard for women to find other women in sports through the traditional media source. Due to this, there has been half as many girls as boys being unable to meet the recommended activity levels, which has contributed towards the current health crisis in the UK.<sup>393</sup> Ever since the FA took over women’s football, from 1993 onwards they have “overshadowed the formal and informal policies and practices that have excluded women from

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<sup>386</sup> Caudwell, J., Holland, S., & Scraton, S. (2005). ‘BEND IT LIKE PATEL’: Centring ‘Race’, Ethnicity and Gender in Feminist Analysis of Women’s Football in England. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 40(1), 71-88. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690205052169>. Page 72

<sup>387</sup> Wrack, S. (2021, December 1). *Women’s football mismatches are happening too often – it is time for action*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2021/dec/01/womens-football-mismatches-are-happening-too-often-it-is-time-for-action-england-latvia>

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>389</sup> Wrack, S. (2021, December 1). *Women’s football mismatches are happening too often – it is time for action*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2021/dec/01/womens-football-mismatches-are-happening-too-often-it-is-time-for-action-england-latvia>

<sup>390</sup> Sanders, E. (2023). *Women’s Super League 2022-23: How did each club do this season?* BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/65537102>

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>392</sup> Carrie Dunn (2016) Elite footballers as role models: promoting young women’s football participation, *Soccer & Society*, 17:6, 843-855, DOI: 10.1080/14660970.2015.1100893 Page 843

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.* Page 843 - 844

football”.<sup>394</sup> The FA have also encouraged the perception that women’s involvement in football is only a recent phenomenon and that it has not been a long-term interest.<sup>395</sup> Between the 2015 and 2019 Women’s World Cups, the number of articles published by newspapers including the Guardian, the Independent and the Times “about the competition rose from 124 in 2015 to 642 in 2019”.<sup>396</sup> Of these newspapers the use of ‘infantilising language, such as referring to players as “girls” or “ladies”’, drastically reduced between 2015 and 2019.<sup>397</sup> Specifically in 2015, there were at least 28 references to the players as “girls” in the tabloid papers and in 2019, there were three uses of “girls” and “lady” or “ladies” in broadsheet papers and 11 in tabloids.<sup>398</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, “a fifth of UK adults have increased their following of women’s sport during the pandemic”.<sup>399</sup> Post covid, there has been a huge growth in the attention and representation of women’s sports as a whole, showing that it is possible for the sport to thrive and grow even during challenging circumstances like covid.<sup>400</sup> Today, the elite female footballers’ status and ‘role models’ does not solely rely on just media coverage; ‘it requires strong and frequent hands-on engagement and public visibility’.<sup>401</sup> For players in 1970, many did not know about women’s football until they started, Liz Deighan explained how she was unaware of any women’s football until 1973 when she started to play and only found out about the history after that.<sup>402</sup> The televising of the 1966 World Cup victory for England men’s team also was a chance for some of the new generation of women’s football after the lifting of the ban to find new models.<sup>403</sup> Having male role models for the sport in the beginning was hugely useful for women’s football as it created a start to the possibilities, however because there had been very little achieved 50 years prior to the lifting of the ban, it was a complicated path to venture down. The media and other previous women’s footballers could have helped future generations of the sport come to the forefront more quickly if there

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<sup>394</sup> Carrie Dunn (2016) *Elite footballers as role models: promoting young women’s football participation*, *Soccer & Society*, 17:6, 843-855, DOI: 10.1080/14660970.2015.1100893. Page 844

<sup>395</sup> Carrie Dunn (2016) *Elite footballers as role models: promoting young women’s football participation*, *Soccer & Society*, 17:6, 843-855, DOI: 10.1080/14660970.2015.1100893. Page 844

<sup>396</sup> Durham University. (2023). *From ‘girls’ to Lionesses: how newspaper coverage of women’s football has changed*. Durham University. <https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/current/thought-leadership/2023/07/from-girls-to-lionesses-how-newspaper-coverage-of-womens-football-has-changed/>

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> Wrack, S. (2021, October 5). ‘Not just surviving, thriving’: interest in women’s sport has risen since pandemic. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/oct/05/not-just-surviving-thriving-interest-in-womens-sport-has-risen-since-pandemic>

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> Carrie Dunn (2016) *Elite footballers as role models: promoting young women’s football participation*, *Soccer & Society*, 17:6, 843-855, DOI: 10.1080/14660970.2015.1100893 Page 847

<sup>402</sup> L. Deighan, ‘Liz Deighan interview’. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection). 00:07:53

<sup>403</sup> Chisari, F. (2004). ‘shouting housewives!’ the 1966 World Cup and British television. *Sport in History*, 24(1), 94-108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460260409414737> Page 107

had been more coverage and information on the players for the Lionesses. Ultimately, this is down to the fact that until relatively recently, the Lionesses and other women's domestic teams across the UK were still largely unknown to the public, and young upcoming players to the sport who needed the role models like there is today to deem it something worth fighting for.

Moreover, the impact of male professional dominance in the sport has undermined the view that women can play. There has always been debates, some less realistic than others, that women's bodies are not made to play the same kind of football that males do.<sup>404</sup> Following the 2022 Women's Euro tournament, there has been well needed focus by 'exercise researchers, doctors and staff involved in the elite women's game - including England captain Leah Williamson', highlighting the need for more kit and technology to be tailored to women's needs and body shape.<sup>405</sup> However the line between aiding and hindering women's football has for many years been blurred. This is due to the issues of potential injuries and management being seen as a reason as to why they should not play, rather than an opportunity to find a solution in order to help women play. Before the Lionesses' success in 2022, 'two-thirds of women working in football have experienced gender discrimination in the workplace'.<sup>406</sup> These statistics come from the 4,200 members of Women in Football (WiF), who 'are a network of professionals who work in every area of the game, on and off the pitch'.<sup>407</sup> Within WiF, only 12% of cases of sexism are reported because there is still the hesitancy to speak out due to fear.<sup>408</sup> Regarding to the 1971 second unofficial World Cup there was a sense of change in the newspapers but in reality the changes were not very progressive in the long run. For example, in a newspaper article written in the *Lincolnshire Echo* the paper refers to the changes in the game suggesting that the male official organisations are taking the women's game more seriously.<sup>409</sup> However the reference to being taken seriously regards to modifying rules like making the ball lighter, the field smaller, the matches shorter and abandoning the exchange of shirts at the end of a match.<sup>410</sup> By today's standards that response to taking women's football "seriously" would be matched with accusations of sexism, but for the 1971 tournament the fact that there was male official organisation involvement made women's

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<sup>404</sup> Roxby, P. (2022). *Boots and balls made for men an injury risk to women footballers*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63636201>

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>406</sup> Wrack, S. (2020, October 8). 'Heartbreaking': survey reveals extent of gender discrimination in football. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/oct/08/two-thirds-women-in-football-gender-discrimination-survey>

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>408</sup> Wrack, S. (2020, October 8). 'Heartbreaking': survey reveals extent of gender discrimination in football. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/oct/08/two-thirds-women-in-football-gender-discrimination-survey>

<sup>409</sup> Lincolnshire Echo. (1971, November 19). *Women soccer players no long a joke*. Lincolnshire Echo. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000332/19711119/012/0012>

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*

football come to the newspapers. In comparison to the 1921 ban *The Vote* mentioned, within one sentence, that the council of the FA 'resolved that football was unsuitable for women and requested its clubs to refuse the use of their grounds for women's matches'.<sup>411</sup> The casual sexism that has been shown and is still around today has caused huge hinderances for women going into football today. Thankfully, there is now more interest being paid to the female footballer's body and what is necessary to help them play rather than regarding them as unable to play to the same standards.

On the other hand, having support from male professionals of football can be a sign of improvement due to having allies that can bring more confidence from internal and external viewers of the sport. The WFA was jointly set up by Arthur Hobbs and Patricia Gregory, with much credit having to go to Hobbs for having huge foresight in 1967 to set up the first women's tournament with 8 teams.<sup>412</sup> Gregory has also made it very clear that despite many stereotypes of the WFA, there were males that helped the association. Gregory specifically states how there was people who talked about the WFA being suffragettes, but she said that they "had a lot of men involved... they weren't suffragettes".<sup>413</sup> Individuals like Harry Batt helped promote and push forward women's football also for the 1971 squad particularly.<sup>414</sup> Batt is often referred to as "a prophet in the wilderness" trying to gain change for Chiltern Valley and women's football as a whole.<sup>415</sup> The impact for both the WFA and women's football more broadly in 1971 onwards of having men supporting them, meant it was a time for change and new opportunities. Looking into fans of football today, 'a study led by Durham University, based on a survey of almost 2,000 male football supporters, detected what it terms "openly misogynistic masculinities"'.<sup>416</sup> In the leagues of women's football today there are a lot of male coaches and managers that have been helping transform the game, however there is now the potential problem where the player and coach relationship barrier can be crossed.<sup>417</sup> There has been a number of personal relationships between players and coaches in women's football that have

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<sup>411</sup> *The Vote*. (1921, December 9). *Ban on Women's Football*. *The Vote*.

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002186/19211209/010/0003>

<sup>412</sup> WordPress. *Early Years - History of the Women's Football Association*. WordPress.

<https://wfhhistory.wordpress.com/early-years/>

<sup>413</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:41:52

<sup>414</sup> Taylor, L. (2019, June 8). *From pink goalposts to blue plaques: a history of women's football*. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/08/from-pink-goalposts-to-blue-plaques-a-history-of-womens-football>

<sup>415</sup> Taylor, L. (2019, June 8). *From pink goalposts to blue plaques: a history of women's football*. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/08/from-pink-goalposts-to-blue-plaques-a-history-of-womens-football>

<sup>416</sup> Taylor, L. (2022, January 20). *Misogyny towards women's sport common among male football fans, study finds*. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/jan/20/misogyny-towards-womens-sport-common-among-male-football-fans-study-finds>

<sup>417</sup> Magowan, A & Sanders, E. (2022). *Why player-coach relationships are an issue in women's football*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/59294074>

been described as "inappropriate", because they often create a "power imbalance" and can lead to a "potential abuse of players".<sup>418</sup> Last year it came out that the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) coach Paul Riley was sacked at North Carolina Courage following allegations of sexual misconduct with two players, which he denied.<sup>419</sup> One thing that differs from the men and the women's game is that these sort of allegations are much less likely to happen in the men's top flight leagues, due to women being taken advantage of because they maybe in a much more difficult position if they report it.<sup>420</sup> However, allies such as Ian Wright involved in the game suggesting that if "people want to play, they should be able to play" male or female, helps to continue the support for the game.<sup>421</sup> Wright, the former Arsenal and England striker, has also made his comments well known regarding the abuse that female football pundits face dubbing himself "embarrassed".<sup>422</sup> What is evident in both pre FA takeover of the women's game and post takeover, is that male alliance to women's football can have a huge impact but can also exploit the women's game.

Finally, the biggest impact in the history of women's football has been the Lionesses' victory in the European Championships of 2022. According to the European Union website, the Lionesses' victory represented much more than just one team conquering the European Championship; 'it revealed the true impact and power of women's sport across the world and illuminated the path towards intensifying women's demands in their pursuit of equality'.<sup>423</sup> The tournament saw the attendance for the Women's Euro double from any previous tournament before.<sup>424</sup> The impact of the Euros has seen over 250 million people watching women's football worldwide, the overall earning specifically for the 'top ten highest-paid women, have seen a 23% increase since 2020, and sponsorship investments are predicted to grow annually by 146%'.<sup>425</sup> Captain of the victorious Lionesses Leah Williamson has said that the Women's Euro has brought about "a change for women's football but society in general, it's about how we're looked upon".<sup>426</sup> Speaking the day before the Euros final, Williamson highlighted she

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<sup>418</sup> Magowan, A & Sanders, E. (2022). *Why player-coach relationships are an issue in women's football*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/59294074>

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>421</sup> Anstiss, S. (Host). (2023, March 24). *Ian Wright: Taking a stand for women's football*. (The game changers, Episode 13) A Fearless Women production. <https://www.fearlesswomen.co.uk/thegamechangers/ian-wright2>

<sup>422</sup> BBC. (2021). *Ian Wright 'embarrassed' by abuse faced by female football pundits*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/56074842>

<sup>423</sup> European Union. (2022). *UEFA Women's Euro 2022: a match for equality*. Sport - for community cohesion and social inclusion. <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/news/uefa-womens-euro-2022-a-match-for-equality>

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>426</sup> Taylor, L. (2022, July 30). The Guardian. *'Women's football and society has changed': Williamson hails Euro impact*. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/jul/30/womens-football-and-society-has-changed-williamson-hails-euro-impact>



wanted “tomorrow to be the start, to be a maker for the future”.<sup>427</sup> England women’s team had come close to winning the inaugural Women’s Euro tournament in 1984, meeting Sweden in the final and losing on penalties.<sup>428</sup> At this time in women’s footballing history however, this did not have a huge impact on football in England as has happened in 2022. Even in 2009 when England came runners up again, losing 6-2 to Germany in the final, there was still not the monumental impact of the women’s tournament last year.<sup>429</sup> By England hosting the tournament for the 2022 Euro had a massive moral boost for the community and spectators around England and the players themselves.<sup>430</sup> According to the value of events report of 2022, it was agreed by 92% of the sample “that UK is a world class host which other nations aspire to learn from”, which the 2022 Euro was a huge part of influencing.<sup>431</sup> Pat-Mitchell Firth opened up about when the final whistle blew in that final at Wembley in 2022, there were tears rolling down her face and her partner got up and collected her England cap, telling her to sit next to the television screen, because she was a part of that team.<sup>432</sup> After the Euros victory members of the 1971 squad met the Lionesses and Leah Caleb suggested that she would not trade that opportunity in for a England cap any day over that privilege.<sup>433</sup> Despite the ongoing historical differences between players under the WFA and the 1971 squad, one opinion they can agree on, is how vital and important the Euros win was for them. For European women’s football development, the 2022 Euro made a huge difference to the way that the public have viewed the sport. The Women’s World Cup this year in 2023, should be the biggest Women’s World Cup tournament the world has seen yet.

In conclusion, many of the reasons as to why women’s football is now in a hugely successful position are due to the external impacts surrounding the sport. Although the 1971 and 1972 squads have been seen as the foundations of the Lionesses today, the manipulation of the romanticised 1971 tournament narrative has brought to light how the squad from Mexico were underdogs and are now favourable with the public today, becoming usurpers of the 1972 official squad. This has had an impact on the popularity of women’s football, but also maintained issues between the two teams. The WFA has had a longer lasting impact with the focus of gearing its ex-players to go into coaching and setting up domestic clubs and

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<sup>427</sup> Taylor, L. (2022, July 30). *The Guardian*. ‘Women’s football and society has changed’: Williamson hails Euro impact. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/jul/30/womens-football-and-society-has-changed-williamson-hails-euro-impact>

<sup>428</sup> UEFA. (2023). *Season of 1984*. UEFA . <https://www.uefa.com/womenseuro/history/seasons/1984/>

<sup>429</sup> UEFA. (2023). *Season of 2009*. UEFA . <https://www.uefa.com/womenseuro/history/seasons/2009/>

<sup>430</sup> UK Sport. (2023). *New report reveals economic and social benefits of the UK hosting sporting events*. UK Sport. <https://www.uk sport.gov.uk/news/2023/01/12/new-report-reveals-economic-and-social-benefits-of-the-uk-hosting-sporting-events%F0%9F%94%97>

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> P. Mitchell-Firth, *interview*, January, 26, 2023. 00:27:45

<sup>433</sup> L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, *interview*, March 8, 2023. 00:35:57

international teams to the standard that is seen today. One slow progression for women's football is its under representation within the heritage sector. Although today representation of women is a huge part of heritage projects, the importance of this was very delayed in being focused on, therefore slowing the growth of the sport. Women have always had a lot more pressure within the media, however the impact of other sporting female athletes in a negative way has also tarnished the female footballer image also. On the surface the political advancements that occurred around the same time the ban on women's football was lifted, demonstrates huge development for women's rights. However these rights are not as transferable in today's sporting world, as issues like equal pay are hugely still in contention when it comes to women's football, and stereotypes are still high despite the growth of the sport. For England women, the FA and FIFA nowadays are helping to develop the women's game however, their slow intervention in the sport delayed quicker potential for women's football internationally. Unfortunately the lack of female role models has also meant that from youth level it was difficult to find out about women's football for a long time, meaning that expectations to live up to were complicated and made it harder for women to find their feet playing football. The recurring theme that football is a male sport has also hindered progress for women as early as 1920 and even today there is a lot more difficulty for women to have involvement in the game without sexist pressures. On the other hand however, there has been many male allies to the women's game helping them grow and develop into a competitive game that now reaches mainstream television screens for all to see, which may not have been as possible without their help. Finally the biggest and quickest explosion of women's football dominance and popularity was due to the Lionesses' victory of 2022. Their publicity on and off the pitch allowed the team to be seen and heard in order to start making real strides for sustainable women's football in England.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the efforts made by the Lionesses on and off the pitch from the summer of 2022 onwards, has meant that there has been a new surge of interest and focus on women's football. The Women's World Cup is being held this year in 2023 and seems to be the biggest World Cup yet, with so many countries making debuts and potentially reducing the gap between the top teams in the sport, opening up new paths for the future of women's football in their countries.<sup>434</sup> There has been many heroines and narratives that have built up to creating this opportunity for women's football, and they have to be commended for their efforts and struggles when women's football was not so supported.

The WFA kickstarted the change and new possibilities for women's football when they got the ban on women's football lifted, this was fundamental for the rebirth of the sport. Their tenacity to continually push the growth of the sport with very little funding and support from the sporting bodies, gave players more of a reason to want to play because the opportunities provided were something never before seen. The differences between the WFA and the 1971 squad did potentially hinder the progress for women's football, with the WFA having more focus domestically and Harry Batt seeing the potential for women's football to be a global phenomenon from the get go. Patricia Gregory specifically stands by the WFA's response to the 1971 squad and suggests that it was essential for the ban to happen in order to achieve the long term goal of women's football.<sup>435</sup> The WFA were responsible for the development of the top flight English women's league, the WSL, and the Women's FA cup competition before that, which is now getting more popular and more competitive every season.<sup>436</sup> The WFA were not without faults however, despite the fact that they created the first official England women's team and had a competitive league quite late on in their history, they were still quite slow to make any major progress that could be sustained without the FA taking over in 1993.<sup>437</sup> The ban placed on Batt and temporarily the 1971 squad, was quite extreme considering women had just got over a ban lasting half a century before that, and they also had huge support for them in Mexico that seemed to be disregarded by the WFA. However, without the WFA women's football may have been banned for a considerably longer time and it may not have

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<sup>434</sup> Guardian Sport. (2023, July 19). *Women's World Cup 2023: Guardian writers' predictions for the tournament*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2023/jul/19/womens-world-cup-2023-guardian-writers-predictions-for-the-tournament>

<sup>435</sup> P. Gregory, *interview*, December 13, 2022. 00:12:22

<sup>436</sup> Word Press. *The Associations Development – History of the Women's Football Association*. Word Press. <https://wfahistory.wordpress.com/wfa-development/>

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid*

led to where the sport is today. The WSL's strength today also owes thanks to the WFA for helping set it up, bringing future generations into the sport at youth level as well as club.

If Harry Batt had not have taken his team Chiltern Valley to Mexico and being dubbed 'England', the question is would there have been an England team established as early as there was in 1972. With players such as Sue Lopez, who competed in an earlier tournament with Batt, suggesting that the England team set up by the WFA was due partially by the 1971 squad, provides much substance to this view.<sup>438</sup> Having support and guidance from a 'maverick' like Harry Batt, meant that these young girls could achieve something never done in the history of women's football by playing in front of such huge crowds and in a foreign country with huge support.<sup>439</sup> The history of women's football has also given more context and understanding of the importance the 1971 tournament was, due to other England teams' successes. On the other hand, much like the WFA they were also not completely innocent due to Batt being too keen and somewhat reckless knowing the attitude that the WFA and the FA had at the time, but still attending the tournament and speaking out against the WFA at the same time.<sup>440</sup> However, the narrative of the 1971 tournament is still an inspirational one, the team have been recognised by the current Lionesses themselves and have now become romanticised underdogs in the public eye making them desirable and popular today. The political war between the 1971 squad and the WFA will most likely never get resolved, however both sides do have valid arguments that can be supported. What is clear is that in the long term the WFA had a bigger impact for the future of women's football, more directly than the 1971 squad, but the 1971 squad influenced the WFA in forming an England team more swiftly and today are recognised as representative of England by the Lionesses themselves.

Looking away from the two main footballing related factors in the re-establishment of the women's game in the 1970's, the external elements have also been a huge influence in speeding up the development of the game. Political advancements in women's rights also helped the debate of lifting the women's ban due to the equal pay act being passed and a change in government with new focus on women.<sup>441</sup> Having male support and connections has helped transform the game with male allies bringing other fans to the women's game and opening new sporting chances to show what women's football is all about. Additionally multi-media platforms as well as the recent increase following in women's sport has meant fast

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<sup>438</sup> Lopez, S. (1996). *Women on the ball: A guide to women's football*. Scarlet Press. Page 59

<sup>439</sup> BBC. (2019). *Women's World Cup: 1971 'lost lionesses' squad tracked down after 48 years*. BBC Sport. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/48771268>

<sup>440</sup> Goodman, G. (1971, September 8). *Soccer girls limp home to a rumpus*. Daily Mirror. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000560/19710908/011/0001>

<sup>441</sup> Wrack, S. (2022). *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Soccer*. Guardian Faber Publishing. Page 80

growth for woman's football. There has been some external factors that may have slowed down the progression of the sport such as the stereotype of football only being a male sport, still being a prominent feature of today's world. Other women in the sporting world have often been scrutinised by the press, making the image of a women's athlete more difficult to be accepted socially. One element that is starting to improve is the representation of women's heritage and specifically women's football. It has not always been as focused on, but today the stories of the heroines of women's football are now coming to the forefront of the heritage sector, bringing to light the fact that women's football has not always been where it is now. Although some of the external impacts on the development of women's football, were not all about the sport, it demonstrates how important societies view is in order for the women's game to improve in the way it has today.

Within this dissertation, the use of previous research into women's football and the material culture surrounding the rebirth of the sport has enhanced the understanding of the topic. Material culture has been essential addition to the oral interviews collated as they have credited and adding value to the players recollections of their experiences. Newspapers and magazine articles, photographs and even physical objects from the second unofficial Women's World Cup, provide evidence to the popularity and interest of the sport. Today, material culture has been used to explain the history of women's football in greater depth, for example the documentary *Copa 71* released this year in 2024, is a testament to the pioneers from the tournament. The use of film footage, photographs and oral interviews provides a very clear understanding and portrayal of the competition during and after it. Furthermore you can now buy merchandise from the tournament also, this demonstrates how material culture is still shaping the awareness of the history of women's football and that with further strides will continue to help make differences in the perspectives of the women's game.

Overall, although it was a lot more recent, the turning point that has impacted the women's game the most has been the tournament of the Women's Euro. Since the tournament and the Lionesses' victory, England ladies have been a lot more mainstream across the media and public view than before the tournament itself. The Lionesses themselves have become the role models that young girls are more able to look up to today, due to the attention they have received more widely than previous Lionesses before. The winning squad of 2022 do however recognise the importance of those that came before them, meeting as many of the first official England squad and playing in front of over 100 more at a match marking the 50 year anniversary of the team.<sup>442</sup> What now remains is will women's football continue on this upward

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<sup>442</sup> BBC Sport. (2022). *England honour former Lionesses in 50th anniversary celebrations at Wembley*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/63118539>

trajectory or does it just rely on England women doing better than the men's national team to stay relevant? What is for sure is the fact that the victory of 2022 has come from a long line of powerful and strong women, who have all faced individual battles and it will be looked back on as a monumental historic moment in sporting women's history.

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## Appendix 1

### Interviewees:

#### J. Brader, interview, March 18, 2023.

Jill Brader is one of the players from the 1971 squad that went to the second unofficial Women's World Cup in Mexico.

#### L. Caleb, C. Lockwood & G. Sayell, interview, March 8, 2023.

Leah Caleb, Chris Lockwood and Gill Sayell are the more well-known members of the 1971 squad who have met the England squad and have much media appearance discussing the squad.

#### L. Deighan, 'Liz Deighan interview'. July 13, 2022. Interview by Eloise Douglas [in person]. National Football Museum (Digital collection).

Liz Deighan is a player that played under the WFA and for England in 1973 onwards. She also was one of the founders of Liverpool Ladies F.C.

#### P. Gregory, interview, December 13, 2022.

Patricia Gregory was the honorary secretary of the WFA. She is the only surviving member of the founding members of the WFA.

#### K. Davis, interview, March 6, 2023.

Kerry Davis was the first women's England player with dual heritage. Davis played as a forward in the inaugural final of the UEFA championships.

#### P. Mitchell-Firth, interview. January 26, 2023.

Pat Mitchell- Firth played in the WFA's England team and was the first player to score a hat-trick for an England Lioness.

#### P. Rayner, interview. March 29, 2023.

Paula Rayner is a former player that was a part of the 1971 squad that travelled to Mexico. She is credited with scoring a goal against Argentina in the tournament.

## Appendix 2

Figure 1 – Douglas, E. (2022). Balón magazine. [Photograph]. National Football Museum archive, Deepdale Preston. PRSFM.2017.3818. Referenced on Page 19

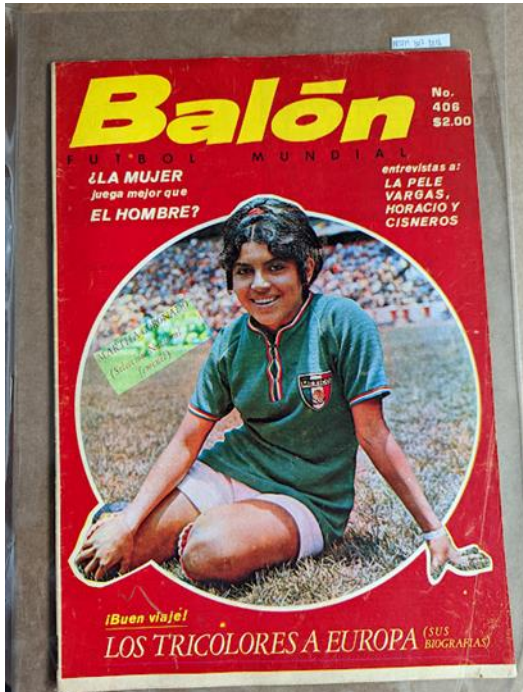


Figure 2 - Douglas, E. (2022). Cine Mundial magazine. [Photograph]. National Football Museum archive, Deepdale Preston. PRSFM. 2017.4033. Referenced on page 20



Figure 3 - Douglas, E. (2022). Impacto magazine. [Photograph]. National Football Museum archive, Deepdale Preston. PRSFM. 2019.58. Referenced on pages 20 and 41

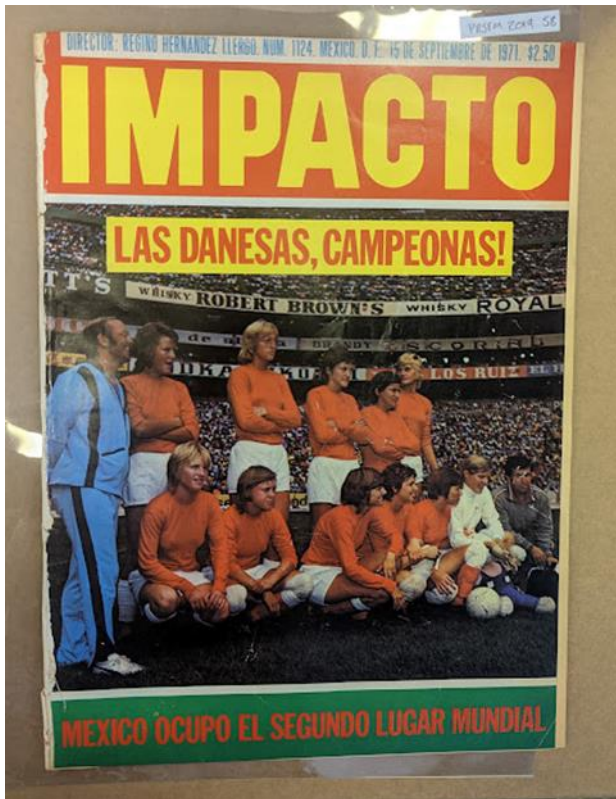


Figure 4 - Douglas, E. (2023). 1971 second unofficial Women's World Cup section. [Photograph]. National Football Museum, Manchester. Referenced on page 45

