



UEFA

Women's Competitions

August 2013

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL

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2013 will have been a good year – and a big year – for women's football in Europe.

At club level, the UEFA Women's Champions League has attracted an unprecedented level of interest, with the high point being the final played out in the wonderful setting of Stamford Bridge, where VfL Wolfsburg wrested the trophy from back-to-back title holders Olympique Lyonnais.

For the national teams, meanwhile, this year will be remembered for a UEFA Women's EURO that was remarkable from every point of view. Full stadiums, record TV audiences and magnificent football will have finally managed to convince the last remaining sceptics that women's football is currently enjoying unprecedented growth – growth that fully justifies the expansion of the next final tournament in 2017 from 12 to 16 teams.

This spectacular development in women's football has only been possible thanks to UEFA's member associations, which have realised the need to implement women's football development programmes. Their efforts are making all the difference. Where once there were only a handful of women's clubs, there are now thousands, with millions of women in Europe eager to get involved in the game, as players, coaches, volunteers and fans.

I would also like to applaud the efforts of the UEFA Women's Football Committee, especially those of its chairwoman, Karen Espelund, who is also the voice of women's football on our Executive Committee.

This new publication gives a very full picture of all the different women's competitions that UEFA organises. In addition, the interviews and the accompanying DVD present the key figures in the modern women's game, and show some of the challenges that women players face.

It is another example that demonstrates that, now more than ever, women's football is at the heart of UEFA's priorities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'M. Platini'.

Michel Platini
UEFA President

HISTORY OF UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

UEFA's relationship with women's football only began in earnest a little over 30 years ago, but is now a high-profile sport capable of filling the biggest stadiums and attracting big TV audiences for both the club and national team game, as well as thriving in the grassroots throughout Europe.

Although discussions were held about women's football at a UEFA level in the early 1970s, and indeed European nations were playing matches then, it was not until 19 February 1980 that a conference was held where it was resolved that UEFA should launch a national team competition. Sixteen countries ultimately entered the first UEFA Competition for National Women's Teams played between 1982 and 1984, won by Sweden after a penalty shoot-out against England.

That had been played 35 minutes each way with a size four ball; in the next competition, the halves were increased by five minutes and a size five ball was used, with Norway taking the title in 1987 and Germany two years later. Now

more than half the UEFA associations were entering and the competition was given European championship status – Germany winning it in 1991, as they were to do all but once between then and 2013.

By now, full 45-minute halves were being used and a FIFA Women's World Cup had begun – the second one held in Sweden and won by Norway against Germany. Strong leagues had also started up in Germany, Italy and Sweden, among other places, and the UEFA European Women's Championship became an eight-team final tournament in 1997 with a group stage for the first time.

Right: Germany winning the UEFA Women's EURO 2009
Below: Germany winning the 1991 championship





EUROPAMEISTERINNEN
1989 1991 1995
2009

EUROPEISCHER FUßBALL VERBAND
EUROPA MEISTERINNEN
1989 1991 1995 1997 2001 2005
2009

EUROPAMEISTERINNEN
1989 1991 1995 1997 2001 2005
2009

HISTORY OF UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Youth footballers were catered for too, with the new UEFA European Women's Under-18 Championship in 1997/98, won by Denmark, followed by Sweden and Germany, who also began to dominate at this level as it switched to an eight-team U19 competition in 2001/02. In that season the first UEFA Women's Cup for clubs was held, too, Germany again triumphant in the shape of 1. FFC Frankfurt.

Since then the growth in the women's game has been exponential. Nearly 30,000 people watched hosts England open the UEFA European Women's Championship (UEFA Women's EURO) 2005 in Manchester against Finland, and soon the European finals were extended to 12 teams. The UEFA Women's Cup has become the UEFA Women's Champions League, with more than 50,000 people in attendance in Munich last year as Olympique Lyonnais underlined their status as a dominant force in club football by beating three-time winners Frankfurt 2-0. And even bigger crowds than that watched matches at the 2011 UEFA Women's World Cup in Germany and 2012 Olympic tournament in England. That all led to the biggest ever UEFA Women's EURO in Sweden this summer – and from 2017 the final tournament will include 16 teams.

At a junior level, an U17 championship began in 2007/08, and by 2013/14 had gained an eight-team final tournament with more than 40 nations entering. Few associations are now not involved in women's football, with Albania and Montenegro making recent debuts at senior level. And moreover the likes of Birgit Prinz in Germany, Louisa Necib in France, Lotta Schelin in Sweden and Kelly Smith in England have become household names with profiles matching those of other top sportspeople. No wonder women's football remains the fastest-growing sport in most of Europe.



Right: England open the UEFA Women's EURO in 2005
Below: 1. FFC Frankfurt celebrate winning the inaugural UEFA Women's Cup



HISTORY OF UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

1972 On 17 April France beat the Netherlands 4-0 in the first women's international recognised by FIFA. Within two years Italy, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Scotland, England and the Republic of Ireland have also played.

1974 A national women's Serie A is started in Italy and Division 1 Féminine in France – both remain among Europe's best.

1980 UEFA's second conference on women's football, with 18 associations present, proposes that a European competition be launched.

1984 After two years of qualifiers, Sweden and England meet in the final of the inaugural Competition for National Women's Teams. After 1-0 home victories in Gothenburg and Luton, Sweden win on penalties.

1991 The first official UEFA European Women's Championship final is won by Germany in Denmark, and China host the inaugural FIFA Women's World Cup.

1993 Norway beat Italy in the European final – the last time Germany would not win it for more than 20 years.

1995 Germany beat Sweden in Kaiserslautern to regain the European title but lose to Norway in Solna in the World Cup final.

1996 A century on from the first Olympic Games, a women's football tournament is added and Norway take bronze.

1997 The first eight-team European finals are held in Sweden and Norway, and won by Germany, while the inaugural UEFA European Women's Under-18 Championship starts.

2000 Norway win what remains Europe's only Olympic women's football gold medal in Sydney.

2002 The first official European women's club final is held as around 12,000 see 1. FFC Frankfurt beat Umeå IK 2-0 at the Waldstadion with goals from Steffi Jones and Birgit Prinz.

2003 Germany beat Sweden with a Nia Kunzer golden goal in Carson. Prinz is named FIFA Women's World Player of the Year for the first of three consecutive times.

2004 Umeå become the first side to retain the UEFA Women's Cup, beating Frankfurt 8-0 on aggregate including three goals from a recently signed teenage Brazilian, Marta.



Brazil's Marta helped Umeå triumph in emphatic fashion in 2004

HISTORY OF UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

2005 A record crowd of 29,092 watches England open the European finals at the City of Manchester Stadium, Karen Carney scoring a late winner against Finland.

2006 Germany's domination is summed up as Frankfurt win the UEFA Women's Cup against holders 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam in the only one-country final to date. By winning the Women's U19 title, Germany hold all UEFA titles.

2007 Germany retain the World Cup and win the inaugural UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship. Arsenal LFC surprise Umeå to take the UEFA Women's Cup outside Germany or Sweden for the first time.



2008 Frankfurt become the first three-time UEFA Women's Cup winners, beating Umeå in front of a competition record 27,640 crowd – a mark beaten a year later when FCR 2001 Duisburg attract 28,112 against WFC Zvezda 2005 Perm.

2009 Germany win their fifth European title in a row with a 6-2 defeat of England in Helsinki. The UEFA Women's Champions League replaces the UEFA Women's Cup with 53 entries, Potsdam beating Olympique Lyonnais on penalties in Getafe.

2010 Birgit Prinz becomes the first European of either gender to win a 200th cap in a 3-0 win against North Korea, though she does not add to her formidable tally of 125 goals in the match.

2011 A European record crowd of 73,680 pack Berlin's Olympiastadion for the opening match of the World Cup, hosts Germany beating Canada 2-1. In all 845,751 people watch the 32 matches.

2012 Lyon win a second straight UEFA Women's Champions League in front of 50,212 fans at Munich's Olympiastadion, while 80,203 people watch the Olympic final between the United States and Japan at Wembley.

2013 Both Albania and Montenegro make their debuts in 2015 World Cup qualifying – and both make it past the preliminary round into the group stage. Germany win UEFA Women's EURO 2013 for the sixth consecutive time.

2017 For the first time the UEFA Women's European Championship finals will involve 16 teams.

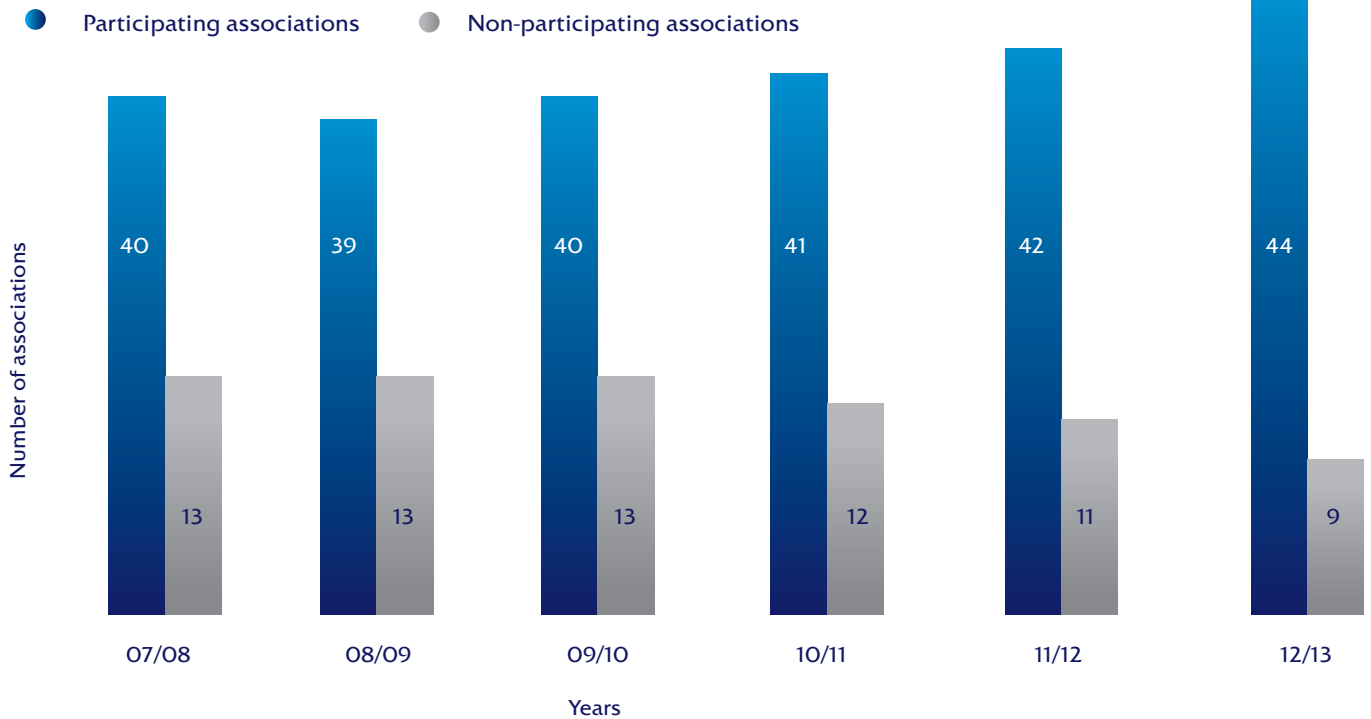


HISTORY OF UEFA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

It is three decades since UEFA first organised a women's national team competition, and the women's club tournament only began 12 years ago, but their growth has been huge. We track the rise of the UEFA Women's EURO from a competition not entered by the majority of member associations to a behemoth spanning over 200 fixtures, as more than 50 clubs a year now go in for the UEFA Women's Champions League.

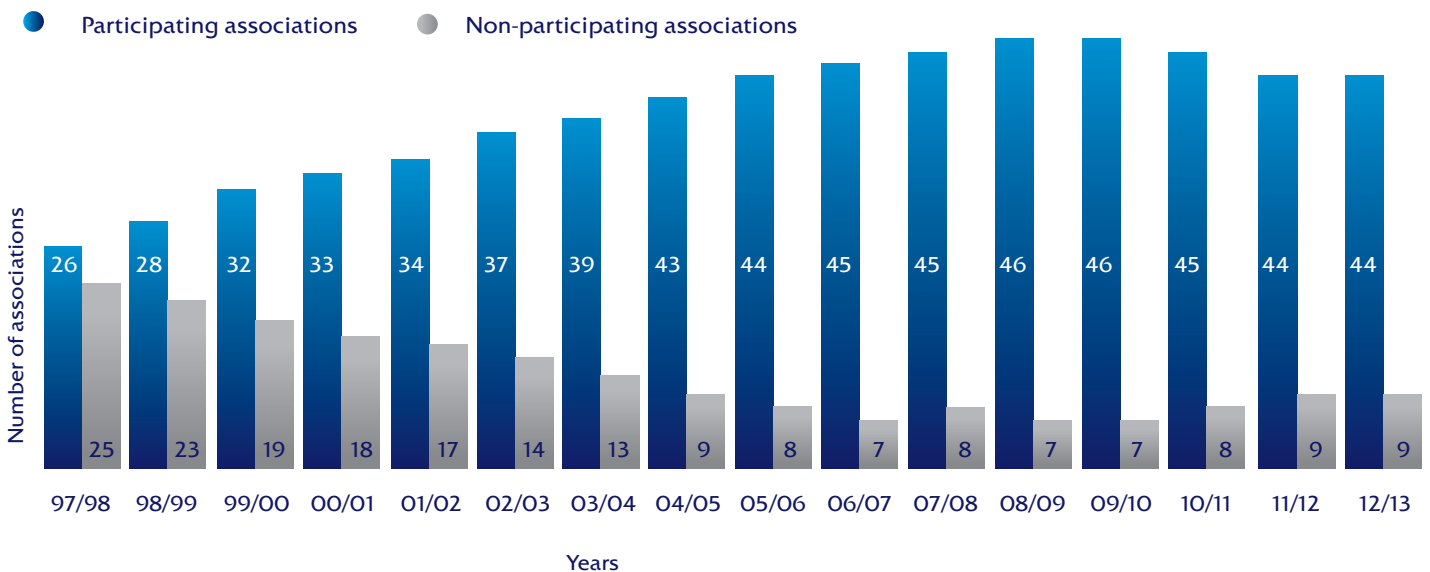
UEFA WOMEN'S UNDER-17 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Participating & non-participating associations



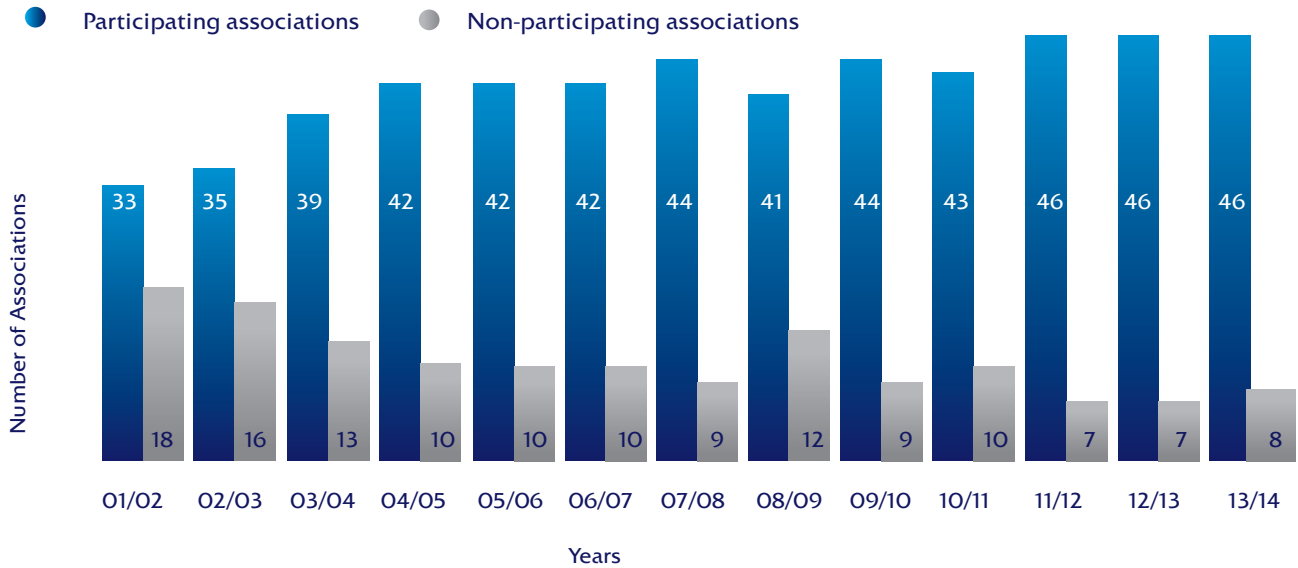
UEFA WOMEN'S UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Participating & non-participating associations



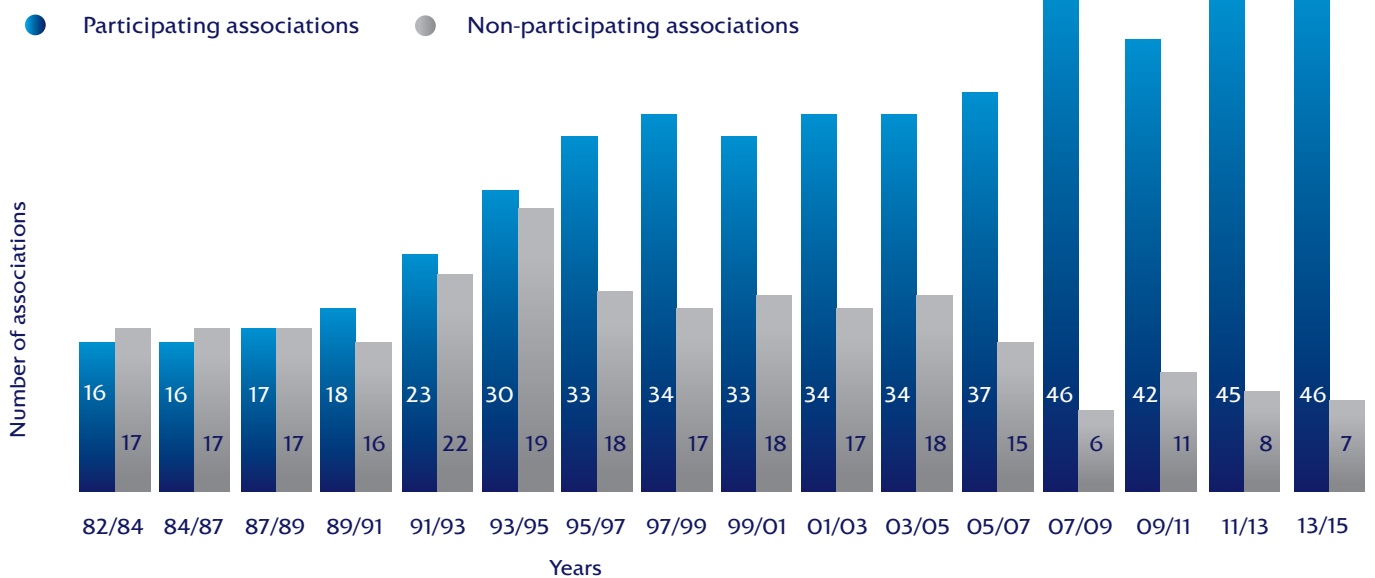
UEFA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE / WOMEN'S CUP (until 2008/09)

Participating & non-participating associations



UEFA EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Participating & non-participating associations





History and format

The UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship was launched for the 2007/08 season, following the inauguration of the biennial FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup for 2008 – the European tournament acts as a qualifier when it is in the same year as the global finals.

UEFA's expectations were exceeded when 40 nations put their names down for the first edition, with the first qualifying round draw taking place on 19 February 2007. For the first season, it was decided that four teams would progress to the finals, which were hosted by UEFA beside their Swiss HQ in Nyon. Germany were to emerge champions ahead of France, Denmark and England, who all qualified for the World Cup.

The following year, Germany retained the title with a 7-0 final defeat of Spain, with France beating Norway 3-1 to finish third. Spain went one better in 2010 with a penalty shoot-out win against the Republic of Ireland, who had ended Germany's run in the semi-finals, and Jorge Vilda's side successfully defended the trophy in 2011 by beating France with a last-gasp goal.

Germany reclaimed the title the following year, knocking Spain out in the second qualifying round before a penalty shoot-out win in the final against a side falling just short for the third time, France (who were to win the subsequent U-17 Women's World Cup in Azerbaijan). In 2013, after Germany failed to qualify for the first time, Poland took their maiden women's title, beating Sweden 1-0 in the final.

That was the last four-team event in Nyon. From 2013/14 the finals are being expanded to an eight-sided tournament with different hosts each year. The first nations selected were England (2013/14), Iceland (2014/15) and Belarus (2015/16).

Polish players celebrate winning the 2013 WU17 final against Sweden



Looking ahead to England

Four venues in England – Burton-upon-Trent, Chesterfield, Hinckley and Telford – will stage the first eight-team UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship final tournament from 26 November to 8 December 2013.

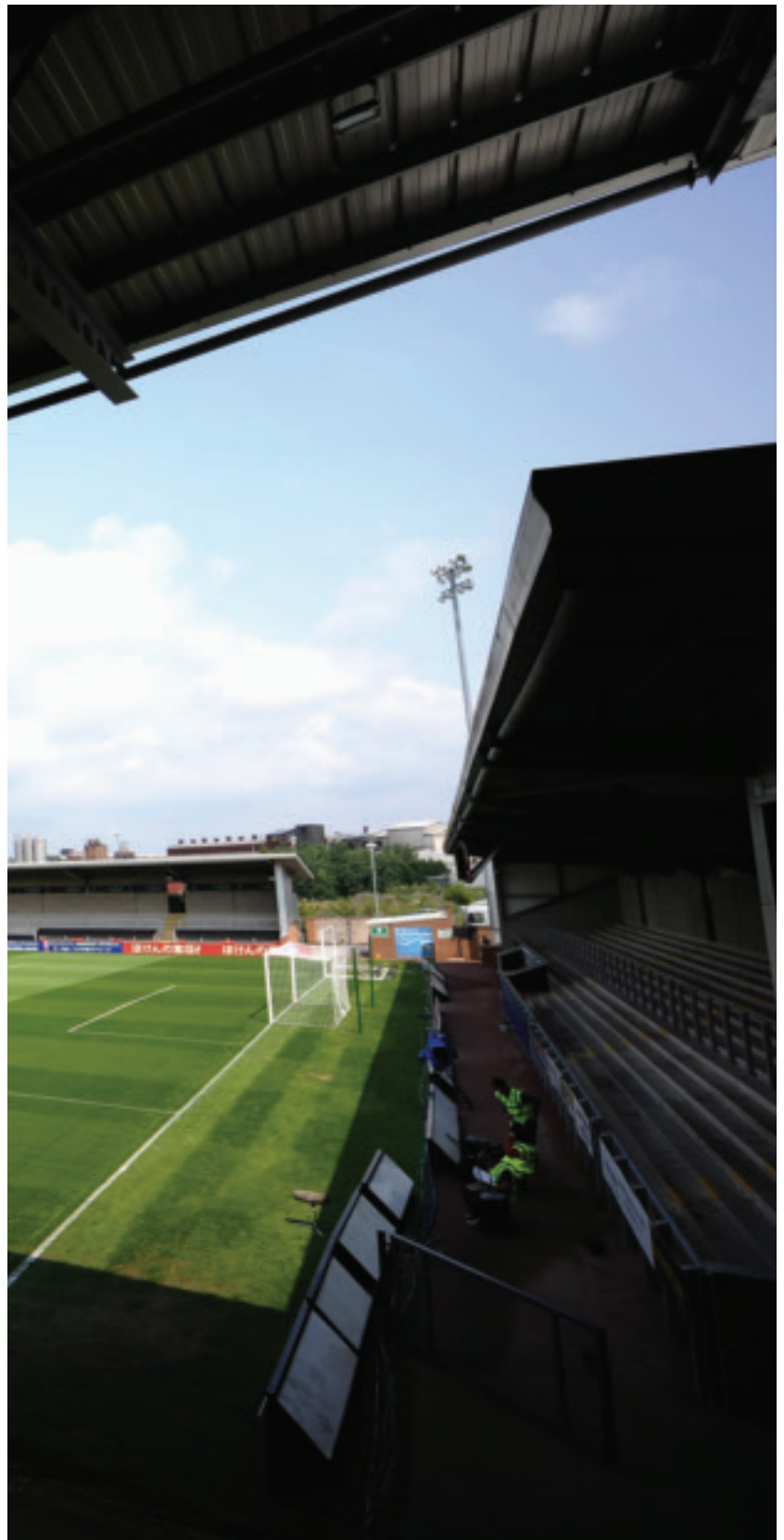
It will be played at the end of The Football Association's 150th anniversary year. England qualify automatically as hosts and the second qualifying round between 30 September and 20 October will define the seven teams that join them. The final tournament is being organised early because the 2014 U-17 Women's World Cup is being played in Costa Rica from 15 March to 5 April.

Following on from staging the women's Olympic tournament this year, The FA's 2013 celebrations also included the UEFA Women's Champions League final at Stamford Bridge on 23 May. England previously staged the UEFA Women's EURO 2005, which opened with a tournament record crowd of 29,092 to watch the hosts play Finland at the City of Manchester Stadium.

Four venues will stage the first eight-team final tournament



The Burton Albion FC stadium (right) is one of the host stadiums for the WU17 finals and sits close to the FA HQ at St George's Park (above)



Behind the scenes....

The UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship is growing up this season, becoming an eight-team final tournament with rotating hosts, starting in November in England. But that was only possible after six successful seasons ending in a four-sided knockout event staged at Nyon's Colovray Stadium, opposite UEFA's Swiss headquarters. At the last of those events played in late June and won by Poland, we caught up with players from each of the four teams to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of life preparing for and playing at a tournament such as this.

How did you get into football?

Ewa Pajor, Poland

"It was long time ago. I was six, maybe seven years old. My cousin encouraged me. He used to come to my village, and we played together. He used to teach me. Then I started to play in primary school. That's where the manager from Medyk Konin saw me. That is my current club. I have lived in Konin since I was 12, and that is where I play."

Anna Oskarsson, Sweden

"How did I start out playing football? Well, I live on Gotland, which is an island in Sweden. There was no girls' team when I wanted to play football, so one of my friends brought me along to a boys' team, so I started out playing with guys. Then I continued playing with those lads, they were the same age as me, and I continued playing with them until I moved away from there last autumn. So I have been playing with boys for perhaps seven or eight years. That was how I started playing football. Then it became, well, the best thing in my life, so I have just continued."

Marta Turmo, Spain

"As a little girl I did ballet, but I have always liked football. My father used to play with me as a child. He would take me to football grounds to play with him, and in school I would play with other girls, some of the girls complained that they did not get a touch of the ball and I always would. And when the girls' team was set up in my home town, in Vilasar, I put my name on the list. I was there for three years, and then Barcelona signed me afterwards. I noticed that during my first year at Barcelona, during the trials that take place when they sign you, I was scared. I was very shy, and now I am much more mature, they gave me the confidence that I needed. The first coach I had at Barcelona gave me a lot of confidence. And I have grown a lot since then, they know how to get the best out of me, my strengths, everything I am good at, and little by little I have been reinforcing those things."



Shayna Raekelboom, Belgium

"My dad played at quite a high level. He's crazy about football. Even as a kid I played with a ball. When I started, my parents didn't believe that I would continue in football. I started playing football at the age of eight in a boys' club. From then on I was observed by the scouts from the Brabant region, and I started in the Brabant squad. Then we played some tournaments against the other regional teams, and that is when RSC Anderlecht recruited me. I started to play for Anderlecht, and then I felt that I had to change clubs and I chose White Star Femina, which is closer to home. It is a better choice concerning school, it takes less time to go to training. It is also because of my dad; thanks to him I have made it, and without him I would have probably stopped playing football."

How much time does football take up – how do you fit it in with school?

Ewa Pajor, Poland

"It is very difficult, but I have to cope with it in some way. I have a lot of training sessions, practically every day. It is very difficult, but I somehow manage to do it."

Anna Oskarsson, Sweden

"Well I moved to Kalmar to play football and concentrate on an elite level of football and going to school, and to combine those two things. That has turned out well now – we train both in school and in the evenings, and so I get a lot of practice. So I feel that I have developed a lot since I arrived in Kalmar. Then I live on my own, so there are a lot of chores to do outside of football, like doing the laundry, doing the dishes, cooking, and a lot like



Left: Ewa Pajor on the ball during Poland's final victory

Below: Spain's Marta Turmo puts in a challenge against Belgium

lunch. Then we have some free time and we rest. Then we have another training session. After that we have dinner and then we go to bed."

Anna Oskarsson, Sweden

"We get up, we eat, and then we have a training session. This is where things can be a bit different, in the way that we prepare for different matches. Then normally we eat lunch when we get back and take a rest. As you can see, it is mostly food, rest and training but there are other things going on during a tournament. There are different meetings with referees and an educational anti-doping session too."

Marta Turmo, Spain

"Well, we wake up, we have breakfast, we have a team talk after the training session. Our training sessions are more for recovery, or to get to know the pitches, if they are dry or not, to know what boots we need to wear. After we eat we have a small siesta, to disconnect a bit, and then in the afternoon we hang out, we are together as a team."

Shayna Raekelboom, Belgium

"We wake up between 08.00 and 09.00. We always do everything together as a group, we always wait for everyone, we don't do anything on our own, which is good for the team spirit. We have training in the morning. We eat before training, then lunch, then training, then dinner. That's how it goes. We have a few theory sessions. Some days we do not have a football session, we relax and maybe have a team-building session."



that. So you need to make everything click, to get a routine and to be able to cope with daily life too. And at the same time be able to train well and move forward in football. I have very high demands on myself in school too, so it's working pretty well."

Marta Turmo, Spain

"It is not easy, also because last year, in the Spanish school programme, I would finish by 17.00, and that would break my day up because at 18.00 I would get the train to go to the training session, and so I had an hour, and I can't do much in an hour. This school year I would finish at 14.30, so I would eat, study until 20.00, when I would go to the training session. But it is hard. Previously at school they would not recognise my courses, and this year they have recognised physical education, so I have two hours in the week to study. But anyway, the little time that I have, I do have to get the most out of it. My life is very different from that of my friends. My friends are perhaps studying, and they may go out for a walk, while if I get 30 minutes free then I go running in those 30 minutes, and those 30 minutes, and that time helps me get my mind off studying."

Shayna Raekelboom, Belgium

"I am at the European School, and they don't take football into account, for them it is outside of school. So it was difficult for me this year, I almost wasn't able to come to the European Championship because of school, because I still had two exams to take. I had a lot of discussions with them and managed to move the exams, otherwise the school wouldn't have let me come away."

Describe a typical day at the final tournament.

Ewa Pajor, Poland

"We have breakfast at 08.30 so I wake up, take a shower, and eat. Then we rest a little while. The first training session usually starts at 10.30. After that we have

Martina Moser



Switzerland's most-capped women's player, Martina Moser, was among the ambassadors for the UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship final tournament in Nyon. A veteran of the 2004 and 2005 Women's Under-19 final tournaments, here she looks back to her own days playing youth internationals and how things have developed in the years since.

Describe your first games in the Switzerland youth team...

"I was pretty young then, I was 15 years old, and there was no Under-17 team, so I started to play in the Under-19 team. It was very exciting and a highlight to play my first matches in that category. It is just something totally different compared to club football. It was a great experience that I had back then as such a young girl."

How have youth internationals developed since?

"Women's football has developed a lot further. You can see the young talents a lot earlier, and if you look at the quality of football being played here at the Under-17 then it's really fun to watch them play. It was different in the past; you came into the Under-19s at a very young age, but now you have Under-17 teams, or in certain associations you even have Under-16 or Under-15 teams. It is just a great development that you can see right there, and it is great for women's football."

How would you advise juggling school work with football?

"Well it's still very important for the girls to focus on school education, so that you have something in your pocket for later. There are only a few players who really can earn a living from playing football later, or make such a name for themselves in football that they don't need to work afterwards. And that is why I like those training schemes which combine football with school education. This is very important for the girls; I always say that everybody should graduate, as there are only a few that can focus just on football and who really make it. So this solution of combining both is just fantastic."





History and format

The tournament began life as the UEFA European Women's Under-18 Championship in 1997/98, Denmark and Sweden taking the first two titles before Germany gave warning of what was to come, claiming back-to-back honours following victories over Spain and Norway.

Left: Germany celebrate a goal scored against Norway
Right: Maren Knudsen of Norway
Below: Spain's Ana Buceta challenges Nadia Coolen of the Netherlands

The format was changed to WU19 in 2001/02, but it did not spoil Germany's run as the 34 teams were whittled down to eight for the finals and then just two: themselves and France. Just as they had two years earlier, Germany again triumphed, winning 3-1.

It was France's second final defeat, after also losing in the inaugural tournament, but they made it third time lucky in 2003 when they overcame Norway 2-0 to finally have their name engraved on the trophy. Germany appeared back to their awesome best the following season, plundering a tournament record 23 goals en route to the final, including a 7-0 victory over Spain in the group stage. But it was a different matter when they met again in the final as Spain earned a 2-1 win.

Spain failed to qualify to defend their title in 2005 as Russia held their nerve to beat France 6-5 on penalties in the final. Elena Danilova was their star with nine goals in the final tournament and was leading scorer again in 2005/06. Yet Russia lost 4-0 to Germany in the semi-finals, and Maren Meinert's side went on to defeat France 3-0 to clinch their fourth success, Isabel and Monique Kerschowski each scoring in both those matches. The twins were involved again in 2007, and Monique struck in the final to secure a 2-0 win against England in extra time.



Sweden's triumph in 2012 ensured a seventh different winner in 12 final tournaments

England's time was to come, however. After Alice Parisi's 71st-minute spot kick helped Italy pip Norway to the title in France in 2008, Mo Marley's charges lifted the trophy in Belarus 12 months later. Their goal unbreached throughout a tournament that attracted record crowds, England were too strong for Sweden in the showpiece, though 12 months later it was another matter, as France beat them 2-1 to claim their second title.

Germany returned to the top of the pile in emphatic style in 2011, reclaiming the title with a final record 8-1 victory over a youthful Norway side, but for the first time they failed to even qualify to defend their crown in 2012. Instead it was Sweden who picked up the trophy in Turkey last year, Malin Diaz's extra-time goal enough to deny Spain and ensure a seventh different winner in 12 tournaments.





JESSICA FISHLOCK

Senior Wales captain Jessica Fishlock is enjoying success abroad with Seattle Reign FC, but the 26-year-old says nothing can match the thrill of playing for her country. She developed that passion at an early age in the Welsh youth set-up, making her bow for the Under-19 side aged 16. Ahead of the 2013 UEFA European Women's Under-19 Championship final tournament taking place in her homeland, Fishlock recalls her first steps at international level.

The final tournament of the UEFA European Women's Under-19 Championship is coming to Wales: what do you remember of your time with the Welsh U19 side?

"I can remember a lot. I used to love being in the U19s, we had a really good group. I used to love going away for tournaments and we did the best they had ever done – we almost qualified for the final tournament. So U19s was a fun time, and to be honest I'm really happy we are hosting it, but me and Gwen [Harries] always say we wish we were part of it from a playing perspective."

You captained Wales at U19 level – were you a natural leader at that age?

"I don't know about that. You are so young at that age you don't know what it takes to be a captain, but obviously there were attributes the coach saw and I suppose it was natural abilities I had even at that age."

You have played in plenty of big games with Wales and your clubs: what advice would you give to players who are doing so for the first time?

"It's going to be a new situation for all of them. They will be playing at home, which is brilliant, but there's always that added pressure and up against big, big teams that are going to be difficult games for them. But they just need to enjoy the occasion and play the games as if they are normal internationals and try not to be in awe of the situation. There's no doubt it will be difficult – they are in a difficult group, so they need to concentrate on what they need to do and try not to let the whole experience affect them too much."

What are your fondest memories of playing women's U19 football with Wales?

"We played a tournament in Holland [in 2005] when we got through to the second phase and that was one of the best tournaments we had ever been in. We had a great group with the likes of me, Gwen [Harries], Katie Daley and Kayleigh Green and we ended up drawing a game [against



Jessica Fishlock of Wales during the UEFA Womens Championship qualification round match between Wales and Germany at New Bridge Meadow

Finland] and if we had won we would have gone through to the finals. That was something that was very special and great to be a part of. Sometimes I wish we could go back to U19s – life seemed a little bit easier then than at senior level!"

A lot of people in Wales will be seeing women's football for the first time at the U19 finals. Does that put any additional pressure on your Wales senior side as ambassadors for the sport?

"I don't think we feel added pressure. It's quite nice that people are aware now and more people are aware of the situation of women's football in Wales. That's all we want, for people to understand that it's good, that it can be watched. We don't feel the pressure, we know what we



Above: In action in an Algarve Cup match against Ireland
Right: Playing for Melbourne Victory in the W-League

need to, we've come a long way over the last two years and that speaks for itself really. I certainly don't feel any pressure and the girls are of a similar mentality to me."

You know Wales coach Jarmo Matikainen: how would you describe him and what do you think he will be telling the team ahead of the tournament?

"He's got such good experience within the women's game with what he did in Finland. He is very thorough in his homework on the opposition players and what we need to do. Jarmo just brings an aura of calmness and professionalism to what we do and that's what we need. He is nothing but great for us and the U19s totally respect him and I hope he can achieve something for us."

What did it mean to you to pull on the Wales jersey for the first time?

"The feeling is still there every time I put it on. Every time I put a Wales shirt on it feels like it's the first time. I'm so passionate and privileged to put on the Welsh top, it's just a feeling that you can't really describe and that you don't get

anywhere else or doing anything else, that's the only way I can describe it. From the first time I wore it to even now, it's the same feeling. I know how lucky I am to be doing something for my country."

Is it still nice to come home to Wales to play football?

"I love it, I love coming back and meeting up with Wales. I love all the girls, they're a great bunch and a great little team. We have a lot of respect for each other on the pitch and off the pitch and that is key. And is why we have done so well over the last two years. I love coming back and I love playing for Wales."

What are the things you miss most about Wales?

"I'm really close to all of them, we've grown and played together for so long that sometimes we miss that company and the people that know you the best, when you go travelling and go from team to team you miss that. That's why it is so good to get back to a bit of normality and Wales is definitely a constant in my life and that's something I don't take for granted."

Your career has taken you all over the world: did you ever imagine that would be possible when you first started playing for Cardiff?

"Absolutely not! I didn't realise this was going to be the path of my life but I'm extremely grateful that it is, and I take nothing for granted, I know how lucky I am. I'll just keep working at it."

America is the dream for a lot of women footballers. Has it lived up to your expectations?

"Absolutely, even more so. America is brilliant – I'm enjoying every minute of it. I'm enjoying the professionalism of how it is run, and also the challenge of trying to play at the highest level and competing with the best in the world."

You are playing in front of some big crowds in America. Do you think that will ever be possible for women footballers back in Britain?

"I hope so. I really hope it is something that can be achieved and it needs to be continually worked on to get the crowds and get people wanting to go out and watch women's football. They have definitely got the fan base and the WSL [Women's Super League] is in good hands, and if it keeps on improving in small steps, hopefully one day they will have the crowds the girls deserve."

“Every time I put a Wales shirt on it feels like it’s the first time”





History



This season will only be the 13th for UEFA's women's club competition but in that short time the tournament has evolved greatly – even changing its name and basic format into the bargain.

and format



When the UEFA Women's Cup was introduced in 2001/02, with 33 entries – one per entrant country – the format consisted of a qualifying round, a group stage played in the form of mini-tournaments, leading to knockouts from the quarter-finals onwards and, from the second season, a two-legged final. That all changed in 2009/10 with the launch of the UEFA Women's Champions League, with the knockouts starting in the round of 32, a one-off final and two entries from the eight top-ranked countries.

The fifth season in that format is now under way, and again more than 50 clubs are taking part. The qualifying round, consisting of the champions of the lowest-ranked nations, is now the only remaining group stage, again played in the form of mini-tournaments in one of the participating countries. This takes place over the space of six days, with the winners and best runners-up joining the representatives of the top-ranked associations in the knockout phase.

Both the round of 32 and 16 are played over two legs before Christmas. But whereas in the round of 32, the 16 clubs with the best coefficients are seeded and no team can meet a side from the same association, the round of 16 is drawn completely openly. This has led to some thrilling ties – last season Arsenal LFC, having ended FC Barcelona's debut campaign in the round of 32, were



matched with fellow former champions 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam and became the first English side to knock out a German team thanks to Kelly Smith's hat-trick in the away second leg.

By the time the quarter-final draw comes round in November, usually only genuine title contenders still remain. Then follows a lengthy build-up to the ties in March, which, like the semi-finals the following month, take place over consecutive weekends.

The teams that emerge then progress to the final, which since 2010 has been a one-off game played two nights before the UEFA Champions League decider in the same city. Four stadiums – Getafe CF's Coliseum Alfonso Pérez, Fulham FC's Craven Cottage, Munich's Olympiastadion and Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge – have had that honour so far. The games have attracted a combined attendance of close to 100,000, including a record 50,212 for the 2012 showpiece where sole three-time champions 1. FFC Frankfurt lost 2-0 to holders Olympique Lyonnais, who have taken part in all four UEFA Women's Champions League finals, losing their title in 2013 to debutants VfL Wolfsburg in London.

This season's competition will conclude in Lisbon, the first major competitive women's fixture to take place in Portugal, and in 2015 Berlin will have the honour, having previously staged the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup opener.

Germany have dominated the competition to date – Wolfsburg's victory was the country's seventh in 12 years. Indeed, of the seven different winning clubs, four have been German: Frankfurt in 2002, 2006 and 2008; Potsdam in 2005 and 2010; FCR 2001 Duisburg in 2009; and Wolfsburg in 2013. Only Umeå IK of Sweden (2003 and 2004), Arsenal (2007) and Lyon (2011 and 2012) have bucked the trend, while another three clubs have reached finals without lifting the trophy – Fortuna Hjørring of Denmark (2003), Sweden's Djurgården IF DFF (2005) and Russia's Zvezda-2005 four years later.

UEFA Women's Champions League Winners 2012/2013

Final London			
Match		Results	
VfL Wolfsburg	Olympique Lyonnais	1-0	(0-0)

Semi-final / home & away			
Match		Results	
Olympique Lyonnais	FCF Juvisy Essonne	3-0	(1-0)
Arsenal LFC	VfL Wolfsburg	0-2	(0-1)
VfL Wolfsburg	Arsenal LFC	2-1	(1-0)
FCF Juvisy Essonne	Olympique Lyonnais	1-6	(0-2)

2011/2012

Final Munich			
Match		Results	
Olympique Lyonnais	1. FFC Frankfurt	2-0	(2-0)

Semi-final / home & away			
Match		Results	
Arsenal LFC	1. FFC Frankfurt	1-2	(0-0)
Olympique Lyonnais	1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	5-1	(3-0)
1. FFC Frankfurt	Arsenal LFC	2-0	(0-0)
1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	Olympique Lyonnais	0-0	(0-0)

2010/2011

Final London			
Match		Results	
Olympique Lyonnais	1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	2-0	(1-0)

Semi-final / home & away			
Match		Results	
Duisburg	1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	2-2	(2-2)
Olympique Lyonnais	Arsenal LFC	2-0	(2-0)
Arsenal LFC	Olympique Lyonnais	2-3	(0-3)
1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	Duisburg	1-0	(1-0)

2009/2010

Final Madrid			
Match		Results	
Olympique Lyonnais	1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	6-7	(0-0)
		penalties	

Semi-final / home & away			
Match		Results	
Olympique Lyonnais	Umeå IK	3-2	(2-1)
Duisburg	Potsdam	1-0	(1-0)
1. FFC Turbine Potsdam	Duisburg	1-0	(0-0)
Umeå IK	Olympique Lyonnais	0-0	(0-0)



MARTINA MÜLLER

Two years after winning the 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup, Germany's Martina Müller joined VfL Wolfsburg, who were promptly relegated. Eight years later, though, in a whirlwind fortnight, she helped them win their first league title and maiden German Cup and converted the penalty that beat Olympique Lyonnais 1-0 at Stamford Bridge to secure the UEFA Women's Champions League crown in their debut European campaign.

Above: Martina Müller reacts at the final whistle after Wolfsburg's victory over Lyon in the UEFA Women's Champions League final

Here the 33-year-old midfielder, who retired from international football last year after winning 101 caps, looks back on her eight seasons with the treble winners.

You have been at Wolfsburg for a long time now, since 2005, and when you arrived the club was about to go into the second division. Can you speak about the journey from there to here?

Martina Müller: When I hear "eight and a half years" it sounds very long, but it doesn't feel that way for me. We have been on a long journey that started in the second division. From the start we played as a team and we were promoted right away. We must congratulate the club because they made it possible for the team to stay together. That helped us with the promotion.

Did your love for Wolfsburg grow with time?

Müller: It was great here right from the start. I started to work in the office of Wolfsburg and it is like a big family; you have that impression from the moment you arrive. That is why I could see myself staying. The second division was the right step for me because it was a lot of fun and we were able to enjoy some success, the biggest being winning promotion right away. What followed afterwards showed that it was the right decision.

How have you developed since?

Müller: We have developed year by year. It doesn't work if players only give 60% week in week out. I had only played for teams that were in the middle of the table, or battling against relegation and needing to fight every week. That influenced me a lot as a player and that's why I always gave my best with the national team, even though I wasn't the first choice. I always tried to give my best; I always gave everything for Wolfsburg and for the national team. The years here in Wolfsburg really influenced me.

Has Wolfsburg's immediate European success surprised you?

Müller: We knew that we had a quality squad, but we didn't expect things would work out so quickly. That is why it is even more enjoyable that we found ourselves so quickly as a team and that we are getting more mature and can start celebrating our success.

What are your thoughts on the final?

Müller: We knew we would be facing difficult opponents; you saw that in the match. We had to take advantage of the chances we got, and in the end it was decided by a penalty, but that totally doesn't matter – the important thing is that we won and we are the Champions League winners.

Conny Pohlers **lowdown**



Last season Conny Pohlers set two UEFA women's club competition records – becoming the all-time top scorer on 42 goals and, by helping VfL Wolfsburg to victory, the only player to win the title with three different clubs. The former 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam and 1. FFC Frankfurt forward gives us her lowdown on the Wolfsburg squad that landed the UEFA Women's Champions League at the first time of asking.

Alisa Vetterlein (goalkeeper)

Very sweet, very calm and a great goalkeeper.

Jana Burmeister (goalkeeper)

A very calm person, but very sweet, and she has a great reach.

Luisa Wensing (defender)

Crazy personality, but very funny and 'dopey'.

Rebecca Smith (defender)

Our surfer girl from New Zealand. A good mate and a leader.

Verena Faisst (defender)

Always there when you need her. Great left foot, and a great crosser of the ball.

Josephine Henning (defender)

Our wall in defence. Plays every game; always there.

Ivonne Hartmann (defender)

Our Ivi. One of the few girls from East Germany. A great central defender.

Lena Goessling (midfielder)

Our all-rounder, she can play central defence or in midfield. Very skilful with the ball, and scores a few goals too.

Johanna Tietge (midfielder)

Another youngster in the team. Soon she will be in the starting XI

Zsanett Jakabfi (midfielder)

Our Hungarian. A very sweet person. Very, very quick, and she can do a lot with the ball.

Anna Blässe (midfielder)

My counterpart! Very fast, a lot of muscles.

Nadine Kessler (midfielder)

Our captain. Always there when you need her.

Martina Müller (midfielder)

One of the oldies, like me! Years of experience, and always looking to score

Lina Magull (forward)

One of the young players. Very skilful, she will become a very good player.

Alex Popp (forward)

Our cutting edge up front. She's our poacher. Always finds a way.

Conny Pohlers (forward)

Has played football for 100 years, and I think she is quite nice!

LEGENDS

In the space of just over a decade, UEFA women's club competition has gone from a proposal on a piece of paper to an event that is not just a great honour to play in – but also to represent as an ambassador. We speak to the last two final ambassadors Steffi Jones and Faye White, who both won the competition as players, and a worldwide women's football legend, Mia Hamm, about the impact of the competition in the United States.

Steffi Jones – UEFA women's football ambassador and 2012 UEFA Women's Champions League final ambassador

It's a great honour being ambassador for UEFA, and it's great to give something back. I know what football gave me; more than just winning or losing games, it's all about respect, fair play. That is what I can tell the girls, that it's a great sport.

The fact that you could play with your club against other international teams was something extraordinary. Only as a national-team player could you say that you had participated at a EURO for example, because you only had the domestic league, but now you had this international competition, and that was special. You get goose bumps and you think, 'Yes, cool!', and you see other national players lining up. That was something very big back then.

Faye White – 2013 UEFA Women's Champions League final ambassador

I was very honoured to be asked and it was something I didn't have to think twice about. My career, not only as a player but off the pitch, has been about trying to raise the

profile and be a role model for young girls to maybe one day emulate, so there's no better opportunity than being an ambassador for UEFA and for such a great competition.

It has helped increase the standard of women's football in those countries. Obviously you play and become champions in your own country, but to then compete against the best in other countries just helps you move on another level. You're playing against top internationals often – it gives you that something extra in the calendar to look forward to as a player. Looking at some of the best games I've experienced, some of the best memories, the drama of the Champions League has always been up there – I've had some special games and some special nights.

Mia Hamm – former world-record international goalscorer

One of the things that's helped American fans follow the European game is social media. We don't always get the telecasts of the game but you can keep up with the players either directly on Twitter or Facebook or indirectly with retweets of what is happening. It's been a great way to open the eyes of a lot of us in America to what's going on in Europe.

Below: Final ambassador Steffi Jones and the trophy at the Champions Festival



Review of the UEFA Women's Champions League Final 2013



On the face of it, Germany's seventh UEFA Women's Champions League win in 12 editions was business as usual. But that the victory of German double winners VfL Wolfsburg could be deemed an upset is testament to the strength of Olympique Lyonnais.

Wolfsburg became the fourth German team to triumph in their debut European season

Lyon went into the final at Stamford Bridge strongly favoured to secure an unprecedented third straight European title. They had not lost over 90 minutes for the entirety of Patrice Lair's three years as coach; they had won a seventh successive French championship without dropping a point; and at the turn of the year they had added United States winger Megan Rapinoe to an all-star lineup containing most of Les Bleues' squad. Indeed, they had reached the final with 40 goals scored and just one conceded in eight fixtures.

Moreover, Lyon had beaten German opposition in the last two finals, overcoming 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam 2-0 in London at Fulham in 2011 and defeating 1. FFC Frankfurt by the same score in Munich 12 months later. Wolfsburg, in the German second tier as recently as 2005/06, were making their European debut, although they had impressed in dismissing Arsenal LFC in the semi-finals.

In the final Wolfsburg were without key players through suspension, illness and injury, but although Lyon dominated the first half they could not score. Then, with 17 minutes to go, Laura Georges handled in the box and Martina Müller, a Wolfsburg player since their relegation season of 2004/05, dispatched the penalty with aplomb past Sarah Bouhaddi – like Lara Dickenmann, Wendie Renard, Amandine Henry and Louisa Necib, playing in her fourth consecutive final.

Lena Goessling was named player of the match after she and captain Nadine Kessler dominated midfield at times against the likes of Camille Abily. "They really put us under pressure, but we wanted to be dangerous, especially on the counterattack," Goessling told UEFA.com. "And in the end it worked out for us."

It had been some rise for Wolfsburg, who until a fortnight before the final had never lifted a major trophy yet were now celebrating a treble. And it was reward for the sustained investment made by the club, particularly since the summer of 2011, when they signed the likes of experienced striker Conny Pohlers.

With the fourth of her six goals in the campaign Pohlers became the first player to register 40 in UEFA women's club competition, ending Hanna Ljungberg's near decade-long stint at the top of the all-time scorers' table. Having previously triumphed with Potsdam in 2005 and Frankfurt three years later, Pohlers was also the first player to pick up the trophy with three different sides. Wolfsburg themselves emulated Frankfurt (2002), Potsdam (2005) and FCR 2001 Duisburg (2009) in triumphing in their debut season, something no non-German team has managed.

Lyon are back to challenge Wolfsburg this season, and with clubs such as Potsdam, Arsenal, Paris Saint-Germain FC and Marta's Swedish debutants Tyresö FF among those also involved, it looks set to be the toughest edition yet.



Holding off Louisa Necib in the final, Wolfsburg's Conny Pohlers hit six goals in 2012/13 to set a new tournament record

UEFA WOMEN'S SWEDEN 2013



EURO



UEFA
WOMEN'S
EURO
SWEDEN • 2013





Germany won the UEFA European Women's Championship. That sentence could have been written in 2013, 2009, 2005, 2001, 1997, 1995 and – with a Norway triumph in the middle – 1991 or 1989. But that does not even begin to tell the tale of their success in Sweden.

Their 12-year run of victories in all UEFA Women's EURO games was ended by a dramatic comeback by Spain, who held them 2-2 in qualifying. Then in their first match in Sweden they drew 0-0 with the Netherlands, so dropping their first finals points since 1997 before an unbeaten record stretching back a year longer was ended in the last group game against Norway.

Yet 11 days later, Norway were beaten 1-0 and Germany were champions once again. Considering the likes of Birgit Prinz, Ariane Hingst and Kerstin Garefrekes had retired from the team, and Kim Kulig and Babett Peter were among six key injuries, many thought this would be the year Germany fell. They did not.

Sweden were the side many identified to dethrone them. That was especially the case with Pia Sundhage taking the helm in autumn 2012 and the presence of Lotta Schelin up front. There was unprecedented backing for the hosts, resulting in total ticket sales of 216,888 – over 75,000 more than at any previous UEFA Women's EURO.

Schelin had a penalty saved in the opener against Denmark but then hit form, her five goals comfortably winning her the adidas Golden Boot. However, when they were up against Germany in the semi-finals, Schelin and Sweden drew a blank and lost 1-0, though the squad were still feted during a half-time walkabout in front of a tournament record 41,301 crowd at the final.

Others felt France, after finishing fourth at the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup and 2012 Olympics, were Europe's finest. They had the only perfect record in qualifying and were the sole side to win all their group games in Sweden, including a 3-0 victory that eliminated 2009 runners-up England.

Very hot favourites to beat Denmark in the quarter-finals, France were held 1-1 and then beaten 4-2 on penalties – Stina Petersen, who had saved that spot kick from Schelin and another from Kosovare Asllani in the same game, again proving the heroine.

Denmark's run was then ended, also 4-2 on penalties, by Norway. Although they had topped their group by beating Germany, Norway were not among most people's favourites, their qualifying form so shaky that a coaching change was made, Even Pellerud returning to the position in which he achieved such success between 1989 and 1996.

But with the combination of an experienced spine in Ingvild Stensland, Trine Rønning and Solveig Gulbrandsen, plus teenage talents Caroline Graham Hansen and Ada Hegerberg, they topped a section also including Iceland and the Netherlands, ousted Spain and Denmark in the knockout rounds and then came so close to dethroning Germany in Solna. But Angerer, reserve in the victorious squads of 1997, 2001 and 2005 before succeeding Silke Rottenberg in time for 2009, had other ideas.

Round by round



“I saved two penalties, it was crazy, I’m still shaking. I just chose the side. The first was a good penalty. For the second I don’t remember what happened, I just took the right side again and it was easy to save.”

Sweden 1-1 Denmark

Stina Petersen, Denmark goalkeeper

Group stage

UEFA Women’s EURO 2013 began with a sequence of four consecutive draws, three of them unexpected – starting with Denmark holding hosts Sweden on the opening day in Group A as Stina Petersen saved penalties from Lotta Schelin and Kosovare Asllani. Over in Group B, meanwhile, Iceland secured a first ever point by drawing 1-1 against Norway and the Netherlands brought an end to a Germany winning run stretching all the way back to 1997 with a 0-0 draw. Group C immediately produced positive results, though, with France overcoming

Russia 3-1 and Spain beating England 3-2 with a last-gasp goal. That set the tone for the section: England needed a late Toni Duggan equaliser to hold Russia 1-1 and France beat Spain 1-0 to win the group. France then eliminated England 3-0 while Spain made sure of second with a 1-1 draw against Russia.

In Group B, Germany bounced back to overcome Iceland 3-0 while Norway pipped the Netherlands 1-0. By the time Germany and Norway met they were both through, but it was still a surprise that the holders’ 17-year unbeaten

run in this competition was ended 1-0 by Even Pellerud’s team, while Iceland’s first ever finals win came 1-0 against the Netherlands, ensuring a knockout place as the best third-placed team.

Sweden, meanwhile, had hit form, equalling the finals record win 5-0 against Finland and beating Italy 3-1, the Azzurre having overcome Denmark 2-1 to be runners-up. Denmark then conceded a late goal to draw 1-1 with Finland and finish third. With the Danes and Russia on two points each, lots were drawn to decide the second best third-placed team. Denmark were the lucky winners.



Quarter-finals

Sweden’s free-scoring form continued against Iceland in Halmstad, the Swedes never looking back after Marie Hammarström and Josefine Öqvist struck early and Lotta Schelin quickly added another before registering her fifth goal of the finals just before the hour. It was closer in Vaxjo, Simone Laudehr’s goal giving Germany a second straight quarter-final win against Italy. A day later

Things felt good, I felt alert and tried to run a lot. At the start of the second half, suddenly: bang! We started to play really good attacking football and scored two quick goals. I just kept working at it today, it felt good.”

Sweden 3-1 Italy

Lotta Schelin, Sweden forward

in Kalmar, Norway saw off Spain 3-1 but there was a shock in Linköping as although Louisa Necib's penalty salvaged a 1-1 draw for France against Denmark, Les Bleues fell 4-2 on spot kicks, Petersen saving from Necib as she nearly had done in normal time to add to her two penalty stops in the opener against Sweden.

“We knew we had to fight for it. France are an extremely good team. When we went into extra time we were hoping to get to penalties – our goalkeeper has been doing really well on those. This is just amazing, the craziest thing I've ever been involved in.”
France 1-1 Denmark (aet, 2-4p)

Johanna Rasmussen, Denmark forward



Semi-finals

Many people had hoped for a Sweden v Germany final but instead it was in the last four in Gothenburg that the hosts and holders were matched. And they put on a show to match the occasion. Sweden generally had the better of the game but could not force their way through and it was Dzsennifer Marozsán, in for injured forward Célia Okoyino da Mbabi, whose goal trickled agonisingly in to settle matters. A day later in Norrköping, Denmark again went to penalties, this time having equalised late through Johanna Rasmussen 84 minutes after falling behind to Marit Fiane Christensen. But it was Denmark who ran out of luck in the shoot-out, Ingrid Hjelmseth stopping their first two kicks from Line Røddik Hansen and Theresa Nielsen before the evergreen Trine Rønning winning it for Norway.

“I don't really have any words to describe it. It's nothing but fantastic. As a goalkeeper it's a win-win situation; you can only become a hero. We had studied their penalty shoot-out from their last match and took a chance they would be doing the same thing again.”

Norway 1-1 Denmark (aet, 4-2p)

Ingrid Hjelmseth, Norway goalkeeper



Final

For the fourth time since 1989, Germany and Norway contested a final. On the half-hour Norway were awarded a penalty, but Nadine Angerer, aiming for a fifth winners' medal, saved from Rønning. Still, Germany had been struggling, so Silvia Neid sent on Anja Mittag at the break and the veteran of the 2005 final win against Norway scored within four minutes after a great passing move and run from Célia Okoyino da Mbabi. And when Angerer saved another penalty from Solveig Gulbrandsen, victory was sealed.

“When Natze [Germany goalkeeper Nadine Angerer] saved the first penalty in the first half and then a second one in the second half, that was just awesome. Which goalkeeper saves two penalties in a final? She deserves all the attention. It is crazy what she has done for us today.”

Germany 1-0 Norway

Anja Mittag, Germany forward

UEFA EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP (UEFA WOMEN'S EURO)

11th UEFA European Women's Championship 2011/13

Final tournament in Sweden			
Final			
Match		Results	
Germany	Norway	1-0	(0-0)
Semi-finals			
Match		Results	
Sweden	Germany	0-1	(0-1)
Norway	Denmark	1-1	(1-0)
		Norway win on penalties	

10th UEFA European Women's Championship 2007/09

Final tournament in Finland			
Final			
Match		Results	
England	Germany	2-6	(1-2)
Semi-finals			
Match		Results	
England	Netherlands	2-1	(0-0)
Germany	Norway	3-1	(0-1)

9th UEFA European Women's Championship 2003/05

Final tournament in England			
Final			
Match		Results	
Germany	Norway	3-1	(2-1)
Semi-finals			
Match		Results	
Germany	Finland	4-1	(3-1)
Norway	Sweden	3-2	(1-1)

8th UEFA European Women's Championship 1999/2001

Final Tournament in Germany			
Final			
Match		Results	
Germany	Sweden	1-0	(0-0)
Semi-finals			
Match		Results	
Germany	Norway	1-0	(0-0)
Denmark	Sweden	0-1	(0-1)



MEMORIES

The UEFA Women's EURO marks the pinnacle of European women's national team competition, but everyone has to start somewhere. We hear from stars of Women's EUROs past and present about their early days, their experiences in youth tournaments, and how the competition has developed over the years.

First football memory

"My first memory would have been playing on really muddy fields in kits that looked massive on me, too big, because they were men's and baggy; but also just the camaraderie and the enjoyment. I used to put on my boots and my kit and kind of be transported into a different world, really. That excitement of being able to play with girls, rather than always just trying mixing with the boys; but yes, that's my first memory, always in a local park, playing, which is most young girls' or boys' [memory], that's where they first start. But then I realised there was an Arsenal team, an England team, and then there were World Cups, European [Championship]... and it starts, these bigger pictures start to evolve, and it gives you certain goals to then achieve and to aim for." – Faye White, former England captain

UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship (2007/08)

"We won 3-0 and I can perfectly remember Colovray Stadium, one main stand and a small hillside on the opposite side, where my parents were. I remember there were quite a few people and it was pretty warm. I remember very well the third goal from Ivana Rudelic, I gave the assist passing the ball from the right. It was a hard-fought final – one player got sent off after tackling me. When we scored the second goal we were pretty sure, though, we would win it, if we stay focused." – Dzszenifer Marozsán, winner with Germany in 2008

UEFA European Women's Under-18/19 Championship (1997/98–2000/01 as Under-18; 2001/02 onwards as Under-19)

"There are seven or eight of us [in the senior team], we've been playing together since about the U19s in 2003. You understand what it is, it's understanding, relationships. Everybody knows each other's good and bad habits, likes, lifestyle and attitudes. We meet at different teams and we're all together in the national team. It's the first thing that must help, because the backbone is the base.

The best memories are probably about the final. But I can't leave out the semi-finals. For us the semi-finals were like the final. It was very important for us, not winning the championship, but defeating Germany. It was like something supernatural, like from another planet." – Elvira Todua, winner with Russia in 2005

UEFA Women's EURO (1982/84)

"It was the first European Championship. We were fighting for recognition that we could compete at the highest level. I do remember two things. I remember a diving header at home that made it 1-0, and the penalty kicks. It was very exciting, and the first time you win something big, it is the memory of my life." – Pia Sundhage, winner with Sweden in 1984

The UEFA Women's EURO became an eight-team final tournament in 1997

"I think the EURO has improved from year to year, so every tournament has added something to the previous one. And it's not been small steps, but great improvements, because Europe, in general, has believed a lot in women's football. There are business opportunities, there is huge growth, a lot has been invested, and a lot earned." – Patrizia Panico, player with Italy in 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2013



Right: Faye White celebrates a goal for England at the 2009 finals

Below: Goalkeeper Elvira Todua in U19 action for Russia



VICTORIA SANDELL SVENSSON

With 166 caps and 68 goals for Sweden, Victoria Sandell Svensson knows a thing or two about what it takes to succeed on the international stage. Having retired as a player in 2009, she is now discovering the demands of organising a major tournament such as UEFA Women's EURO 2013.

"I knew a lot of people were involved in an event like this, but the size of the operation is something I wasn't aware of," the former striker told UEFA.com. "There's people from UEFA, from the LOC [local organising committee] and from all host cities, and everyone's doing a fantastic job. It's awesome to be on this side of things."

When Sweden was selected to host the competition, Sandell Svensson was soon recruited by the organisers to work within team services, liaising with the 12 competing nations on matters such as accommodation and travel. "We were awarded the finals more than 1,000 days ago, so it has been a long process of preparation," she said.

"Then, suddenly, two to three weeks before the start, one began to wonder where all the time had gone. And now we suddenly realise it will all be over soon – a strange feeling."

Sandell Svensson featured at her first continental finals in 1997 and her last 12 years later. In between, she was a key member of the team that finished runners-up at the 2003 FIFA Women's World Cup. In other words, there can be few individuals better qualified to comment on the action so far at Sweden 2013.

"Every match is much tighter these days," said the ex-Djurgårdens IF player. "Some years ago perhaps there would have been larger winning margins; now we see teams that were less fancied – like Spain – measuring up to the best nations."



Left: Victoria Sandell Svensson in action for Sweden against Norway at UEFA Women's EURO 2009



SWEDEN
2013

Grassroots activities

Women's football is evolving extensively worldwide – major events such as the Olympics, the Women's World Cup and the Women's EURO clearly demonstrate its new-found position in the sports world.



In Europe, the football family can be genuinely proud of the outstanding progress women's football has made – and not only in terms of the professional competitions that exist today, but also of the steadily increasing number of young girls and women playing at grassroots level and expressing their heartfelt passion for football.

Certainly, a key element of the current success has been in defining the women's game within football as a whole. It is important to understand that it does not seek to match the physical stamina of the men's game. Women's football simply seeks recognition as a game of its own, played to its own rhythm and technical ability. It is a team sport which encourages women to play to their own aspirations.

UEFA strives to develop football for women in all of its 54 member associations. The challenge has been not only to increase the number of female players, but to position more

women in the boardroom and in operational roles such as coaches or referees.

As it stands today in Europe, there are approximately 1.2 million registered women players. There are 101 female European international FIFA referees and 127 international assistant referees. Numbers of women coaches are growing quickly in response to the many coaching programmes that have come alive across Europe aimed specifically at them. There is no doubt that these statistics are very good compared to five years ago, but UEFA would like to see more change and bigger numbers. Hence the continuation of its exciting women's football development programme (WFDP), which has now extended into its next growth phase.

Running from 2012–16 under the UEFA HatTrick funding programme, the WFDP will support and fund all UEFA member associations in their quest to nurture and promote the women's game in their communities, clubs, schools, parks and playgrounds. The concept is simple – that women's football has arrived as a team sport and all girls and women can play. The key factors to develop are perception and accessibility.

Up to now, UEFA has kept track of the approved WFDP projects through reporting and regular visits to member associations. In reviewing the content and results, several factors have stood out as fundamental to the future development of women's football.

The sun shines on the Arena Linköping before the UEFA Women's EURO 2013 fixture between England and Spain

CALLING ALL WOMEN: Europe wants you to play football!

Grassroots: Currently, the uptake of women's football varies significantly from country to country but the method used Europe-wide to generate new interest is predominantly grassroots football. The vast majority of WFDP-supported projects have been started in schools or with local community centres, reaching out to girls and teaching them the rules of the game both on and off the pitch. Many associations have used their own star players and professional coaches as role models, organising football festivals, youth tournaments or summer camps. The projects span many age groups, with some girls as young as five getting involved. It is clear that supporting the women's game at the base level and empowering young girls to play is essential to both growth and sustainability.

Integration and perception: Over the course of the WFDP, these two factors have become increasingly recognisable as milestones. Several projects have been approved to enhance integration, for example the creation of a mixed youth tournament or a call for clubs to form girls' teams with combined training sessions, so that boys and girls can practise together. A number of associations have also launched public relations campaigns to promote the women's game not only in the eyes of potential players but also to positively influence parents, teachers, the media and governments towards a stronger role for women in football. The common thread between integration and perception is acceptance, which is of vital importance when defining women's football as a game in its own right. In some cases, women playing football can liberate their role in society and help tackle fundamental issues such as gender prejudice and discrimination.

Player pathway: it is essential to keep incentive alive by creating a career pathway to support the best possible advancement of elite youth players. Many of the WFDP projects to date have included newly launched women's competitions, leagues or elite youth programmes, providing more opportunities for talented players to compete at a regional level and potentially advance to the international arena. In tandem, and of equal importance, many associations have invested in coaching and referee courses to raise the level of female match officials and instructors available to nurture and guide the upcoming new players

in the long term. Some countries have opened dedicated women's football centres, which are fully operational as training centres and represent the hub of their national women's game.

In this light, UEFA has recently staged a series of international development tournaments at women's Under-16 and U17 level. The tournaments are true learning experiences for the young players, not just in fine-tuning their skills through practice and guidance, but also allowing them to experience an international and highly competitive environment. On an annual basis, UEFA also organises the European Women's Under-17 and Under-19 Championships, as well as the increasingly well known UEFA Women's Champions League. The UEFA Women's EURO is held every four years.

The WFDP seeks to bring added value to football as a whole. UEFA and its associations have big ideas and hopes – and stimulating work lies ahead, with the overall well-being of European football in mind. A complete review of the WFDP is now available, providing individual project information and statistics relevant to each UEFA member association.

The UEFA message must ring out loud and clear across Europe – it is a call to girls and women to love football and to get involved at their nearest school, club or national football association. Football is for the enjoyment of everyone; we want to see more women taking advantage of the new opportunities we have worked so hard to deliver.



VfL Wolfsburg's players show off their 2013 haul of German league and cup trophies and the UEFA Women's Champions League trophy

EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Malta and Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Malta Football Association (MFA) joined the UEFA women's football development programme (WFDP) in 2011 to raise the profile of the women's game in Malta.

The association launched an extensive branding and public relations campaign promoting the slogan 'Get into football and gain confidence beyond the field'. So far, the response to the concept has been fantastic. The MFA has also set out five key challenges that it believes need to be overcome for women's football to flourish:

1. Raise the profile and change perceptions.
2. Increase the number of girls playing football.
3. Improve the level of the game by implementing appropriate changes in the national league structure.
4. Retain, fortify and increase the number of women's teams by applying better administrative and financial incentives.
5. Encourage and train skilled female coaches, referees and administrators.

The MFA is taking steps to achieve all of the above in the coming years. Among their long-term goals are to increase the number of girls playing football from 5% to 10% of the female population, to establish a WU13 girls' football festival, and to create six new U16 girls' teams and four new women's teams by 2016. These are adventurous targets but they are fully in line with the future vision of women's football in Malta, which has now become a priority for the association.



Recently the MFA opened a new girls' academy, led by women's football head coach Pierre Brincat and his team of assistants. The most promising girls from all regions of Malta are given the opportunity to assemble at the centre for weekly training. Currently, 50 girls attend aged between 9 and 15 years attend the sessions.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Association (NFSBiH): The NFSBiH joined the WFDP for the pilot phase in 2011/12 with a project called 'Say YES to women's football'. The two-day event aimed to involve as many girls as possible nationwide, no matter if they were registered or unregistered players. The central idea was to create a support network that united players, clubs and officials in women's football. Day one was a technical seminar for coaches of women's football, and day two was a women's football festival including a mini-tournament for WU19 and WU17 teams and a variety of workshops and training sessions for WU15 players. In total, 400 girls, 20 coaches, 20 assistant coaches and nine event organisers took part.

The next phase for Bosnia and Herzegovina is a united women's premier league which will officially launch on 17 August 2013. This is a long-term project to bring together the (currently separate) league system, giving unity and stability to clubs and their female players. The federation will provide match venues, transportation for the visiting teams and match officials. It will also cover the cost of registering players and clubs. Providing these additional resources will encourage growth and participation. It is also hoped that a united league will overcome issues such as discrimination and help foster more positive attitudes of tolerance and acceptance towards other races and religions. This is an excellent step forward for the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Association.



Left: Poster to raise the profile of women's football in Malta
Right: 400 girls took part in the 'Say YES to women's football' event in Bosnia and Herzegovina



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