

RESUME

The Euro Effect

How the Lionesses Euro success has significantly raised domestic attendance across the UK.

3/1/2023By Lucy Akehurst

According to research by Nielsen 45% of a “healthy” population would watch women’s sports live. In contrast, 63% of this healthy population would watch men’s sports live.

Since the Euros in the WSL in England ticket sales and attendance have risen around 200% from last year. It would be hard to argue that investment into the Euros to try and increase the popularity of the game over here has not been successful.

The North London derby at the Emirates broke record ticket sales for domestic matches over here with a record ticket sales reaching 53,737. It broke the record previously set by another North London derby (which took place on the other side, at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium 38,262)We have to give credit to Arsenal for their attempts to try and boost sales of not just this match but others too - including their unfortunate loss to Manchester United where an injury-time winner secured United the three points. That match had an attendance of 40,604 which, at the time, placed it as the second most attended wsl match EVER (the record has now been taken over so now sits at 3rd place in the viewing figures)- behind only the north London derby 2 months prior.

The gunners have promoted ticket sales on their social media feeds, getting the likes of former player and football legend Kelly Smith behind the campaign. Adverts for the matches hosted at the Emirates have also been plastered around underground stations nearby.

It’s not just Arsenal who have done a huge amount to jump onto the post-Euro buzz here in the country. Manchester City hosted the Manchester derby at their men’s first team ground the Etihad stadium - attendance figures for that match were 44,259, a record for the Manchester Derby. And the “Merseyside “ derby (between Liverpool and Everton) was promoted by the men’s team manager Jürgen Klopp on Instagram and reached viewing figures in the stadium of 27,574. The match also launched the career of Man City’s Jess Park (on loan at Everton) who stunned everyone with her 33rd-minute goal. Since then she made her international debut, was an unused substitute in England’s friendly against the USA, and scored a debut goal for country in a friendly against Japan.

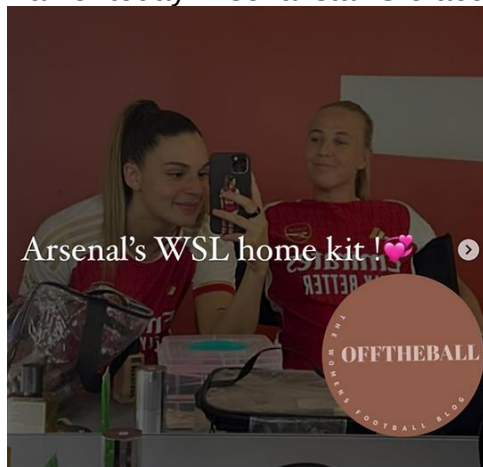
Perhaps what this season has taught us is that the WSL can reach record crowds - the numbers we see in premier league matches here. And it’s becoming far more frequent -it’s no longer just the occasional match to reach high attendance figures. In previous years when we were talking about growth, it was often in small numbers - in 2015 average attendance was 1,076, 2016 was 1,128. In 2017/18 the FA changed the layout of the women’s super league so it mirrored the elite men’s calendar, causing viewing figures to drop to 953 fans per match on average. 2018/19 saw a slight increase to 1,100. The 2019 season was probably the first to see a “major increase” - most likely as a result of the 2019 World Cup to an average of 3,072 fans. It’s great to see an increase in attendance - and real investment into the sport

over here. It was long overdue. For a while money to fuel the league has come from the FA or the club's male counterparts because to put it simply to have a women's club run as a single enterprise was just too risky and not entirely profitable. Along the way the FA have had to make tough decisions - including when they made the WSL completely professional (some clubs had made the move prior) and the second tier - the championship - semi-professional. As a result, some clubs fell to the lay side as they could not fund this move. The majority of these clubs where either stand-alone clubs (without a male pro side) or in the lower leagues of the men's football tier system in the UK.

Although -on the contrary- This has allowed for other, newer, clubs to be formed. The likes of West Ham (who have a male premier league side) were given a space in the top flight, the WSL, in the expansion of the league- which now has 12 teams, the top three making Champions league spaces and the bottom side relegated to the Championship. For all we can say not every move from clubs, FA, UEFA or FIFA has positively impacted the game for women, but huge steps forward have finally happened and for the first time could women's football finally be truly sustainable?

Arsenal's new home kit - everything we know

Earlier today Arsenal star Gio accidentally leaked the clubs kit for next season.



It has been rumoured that next season Arsenal women will have a different set of away kits to the male side.

This follows suit of the England (and other countries) national sides- although is not the norm in domestic football , especially here in England.

By the looks of it the home kit will pay homage to the Invincibles (for the male side) and the champions league winning side. These two great sides already meet on one of the 8 designs displayed on the Emirates stadiums as part of

updates that happened this season to the ground.

Although, concerns will be raised over the fact the club -despite having separate mens and women's kits have opted to have white shorts (from the look of the leaked pictures) and despite the fact that many players -including Arsenal forward Beth Mead have expressed their anxieties with wearing white-coloured shorts on their periods, it looks although the club has not made the move.

Arsenal manager Jonas Eidevall has said in prior interviews that the decision would be based on player concerns, but at that point no player(s) had come forward.

The second / away kit design seems to look as though it has a blue / green undertones and of the 2 leaked kits I would have to say it is my favourite. The kit perhaps pays homage to those once worn at Highbury.

So, will you be buying any of the new kits?
And what do you think of having separate women's and men's kits?



Player Pregnancy Protection

'We deserve better', Players are calling out for more pregnancy protection, but what are clubs really doing?

By Lucy Akehurst

In the recent few weeks multiple players have come out to speak about their poor treatment during pregnancy leave.

It's disappointing that clubs are not protecting their players. A woman has (and should have) a right to have a child, even at the elite of sports.

Reading, Scotland and former Arsenal player Emma Mukandi (formally Mitchell) came out on a podcast talking about the issues around pregnancy leave, although has since clarified in a Twitter thread "I was paid full wage throughout my maternity leave". Mukandi talks about her pregnancy leave in Alex Scott's pre – Euro documentary. Which you can watch here : <https://youtu.be/QBHJqwan8eI?t=2710>

However, It seems Mukandi was 'one of the lucky ones'. Juventus and Icelandic International Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir -who played at the eight time, and current holders of, European Champions Lyon at the time of her pregnancy. She talks about how her, the team doctors and physios kept her pregnancy secret. 'I didn't have time to think or be concerned about my salaries from the club. I didn't have any reason to think anything would go wrong. Until I didn't get my first paycheck', Sara was then told that "If Sara goes to FIFA with this (to try and get her missed months of wages back), she has no future in Lyon at all" looking back she says "My worries kept piling up. I felt like sh*t" In May last year her long going law suit over her unpaid salaries came to an end after the club was ordered to pay them.

She finishes off her article by saying "I want Lyon to know this is not OK. This is not 'just business'. This is about my rights as a worker, as a woman and as a human

being” “There’s a lot more work to do. We deserve better” You can read the full article on The Players Tribute.

So, what do clubs need to do? Last year the FA and PFA agreed terms to give players new maternity (as well as injury) rights. WSL players now legally must receive 100% of their weekly wage for the first 14 weeks of maternity leave, and from then on drops to the ‘statutory rate’ . The Injury rights where also updated to match the male rights, being paid their basic wage for 18 months post injury. Although, the PFA said there is still much to be done to improve female player rights to mirror those of their male counterparts.

Arsenal scrape past Leicester City to keep up pressure on title race

Yesterday Arsenal kept the pressure on the title race, by securing a 1-0 win over Leicester thanks to a Frida Maanum beauty of a goal.

Leicester came into the match in flying form. And, despite the fact that they where sitting rock bottom before Christmas having picked up no points, but now sit 10th , having now picked up 13 points, equal with the number of points of Brighton , but having won a game more and with a better goal difference , on -27 over Brighton's - 32.

And, having now picked up a 4-0 win against Liverpool last week the foxes could go in with a slight confidence, especially knowing that their opposition was so short in numbers.

The gunners dominated possession throughout the match, although perhaps the figure of their 53% possession does not show so.

Arsenal where awarded a penalty in just the 6th minute of the match. But, young goalkeeper Janina Leitzig -on loan to the foxes from German side Bayern Munich- stepped up to the challenge, going the right way as a result saving the potential goal.

Despite a host of chances for Arsenal in the first half none turned out to be goal bound.

Half Time - 0-0

Arsenal came out the more prominent side in the second half, pressing more into the Leicester side.

Although, that's not to say that Leicester did not threat to score in both halves of the match, they only had 2 less shots on target than Arsenal (with 5 rather than 7 shots on target).

It took a wonder goal from Frida Maanum to make the difference in the game. The Norwegian's goal in the 64th minute would be the only goal of the match. Assisted by Arsenal's newest signing, Katie Taylor who was a substitute to come on during the match.

Maanum would go on to nearly have another wonder goal, from a free kick that closely hit the cross bar.

Final score - Arsenal 1 -0 Leicester City

Arsenal will now be aided by Manchester City's 2-1 loss to Liverpool (blog will be coming soon!) to help them to get in the top 3, and so a champions league place. In case you needed a reminder, the gunners were knocked out in a late added time goal in the Champions League's semi final by Wolfsburg.

It was important the gunners to win the match, and with City's slip up against Liverpool now puts the top 3 spaces in Arsenal's hands, seeing as they have 2 games in hand over City -due to their champions league action.

Arsenal play midweek against Brighton, who are currently in good form under new management and have almost definitely escaped the drop to the Championship.

The top 2 sides of the league, Man Utd and Chelsea, will play each other next weekend in the FA cup final at Wembley.

Manchester United sit 1st, although have 2 games in hand over Chelsea- who sit behind them by 2 points.

Leah Williamson ruptures ACL in massive blow to both England and Arsenal

Arsenal have confirmed that England Skipper Leah Williamson has ruptured her ACL, and so will almost definitely be out for England's 2023 WWC in Australia and New Zealand in under 100 days time.

Williamson suffered the injury in Arsenal's 1-0 defeat to Manchester United midweek. Arsenal, who play tomorrow in the Champions League, now have 3 first team players out with ACL injuries. Plus, to note these are not just any 'first team players' Arsenal are now without the WSL all time leading goal scorer, Golden Boot and

Player of the Tournament winner of the 2022 WEURO as well as the England's captains injury.

The news breaks just after the gunners announced that their captain, Kim Little is also injured for the remainder of the season -although not with an ACL injury.

So , where does this leave both England and Arsenal? Well, Arsenal play tomorrow in a massive first leg of the Champions League Semi Final away in Wolfsburg. England are now almost definitely Captain-less for the World Cup. And, in addition, If Millie Bright does not return from her personal injury woes and if Beth Mead has neither returned then the Lionesses will have to go to the World Cup without :

- Both their Captain and Vice Captain
- And Top goal scorer (at the Euros)

It is such a massive blow to both club and country.

It is clear there is a massive problem in the women's games with ACL injuries. Below, I have featured a few YouTube videos that may be interesting for those wanting to look into the subject. Please be aware some of the videos may contain images and depictions of blood etc.

So, where do you think this leaves Arsenal and England ?

Arsenal play in the Champions League tomorrow.

To watch live [:https://www.youtube.com/live/luPzyJRV1cg?feature=share](https://www.youtube.com/live/luPzyJRV1cg?feature=share)

Why Arsenal's 16 year old bench could be pivotal to success this season.

It's no debate that the Arsenal women's academy system and ability to spot talent is some of the best in the world.

The likes of Alex Scott , Lotte Wubben Moy, Leah Williamson and Anna Pattern have come through the system.

In Arsenal's 4-0 win against Leicester 16 year old Michelle Agyemang made her senior debut. Having joined the club's academy age 12 , at age just 6 years , Michelle said it was a 'Dream of hers' to play for the team, 'I wouldn't want to do it at any other club but here' .

At just 16, Agyemang has been in squads with Bal an Dor nominees, the WSL all time top goal scorer as well as international players currently representing country.

It's really important for clubs to have a working academy system to be sustainable - it is all good buying new players for a club but with academy systems it allows you to build (or create) new players.

Agyemang played 10 minutes for the gunners following the injury of Swedish international Lina Hurling, with the squad already without Vivianna Miedema via leave of absence.

Although top of the league Arsenal are going to need to give their everything to beat United, who have only lost one match this season to the reigning champions Chelsea.

Considering the amount of injuries the gunners have, its incredible to think they are still unbeaten in the league, and beating European Champions Lyon 5-1, making light work of them.

Leah Williamson did make a return to training, although she could only 'run in straight lines' according to Arsenal's twitter page.

Captain Kim Little is also out, suffering an injury to her knee. The club have not confirmed anything else on this matter, although Little has not been featured in squad lists since her injury, and is not expected so for the United match.

Defender Raffelle Souza is also out with a long term injury, with a fractured foot. Wubben Moy and Nobbs also had to withdraw from the england squad via minor injury, although they have been training with the rest of the squad and expected to return for the weekends fixture.

Star forward and second placed Bal an Dor nominee Beth Mead pulled out of the lionesses camp due to personal reasons, although again is expected to return for the United match, to play against the club in which she supports herself.

Vivianna Miedema is also expected to return, having not played for her nation during the international break, instead being given time to rest and recharge ready.