

THE TECHNICIAN

WOMEN'S

**Editorial:
Unending
Growth and
Development!**

**Interview:
Gero Bisanz**

**The Lady
Gunners**

**UEFA Coaches
Circle**



**NEWSLETTER
FOR COACHES**

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UNENDING GROWTH



IMPRESSUM

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COVER

German women's football reigns supreme in Europe: FFC Frankfurt won this year's UEFA Women's Cup, beating rival German club FFC Turbine Potsdam in the final.

(PHOTO: HEIMANN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES)

Sandy Maendly
(Switzerland, in red)
and **Sonja Suosalo**
(Finland) in action
during the
2005 European
Women's Under-19
Championship
final round.

GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL AND DEVELOPMENT!

EDITORIAL

BY KAREN ESPELUND
CHAIRWOMAN, UEFA WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL COMMITTEE

I'm writing these lines just a day after attending a thrilling UEFA Women's Cup final between 1. FFC Frankfurt and Turbine Potsdam, when more than 13,000 enthusiastic spectators filled the stadium to see the home team, Frankfurt, receive the trophy for the second time in the five-year history of the competition. They proved to be the best of the 45 participating clubs. In writing this, I also want to underline the fact that 44 out of the 52 UEFA member associations participated in this club competition. This indicates that women's football – when compared with almost all other sports – is among Europe's biggest when it comes to the number of participants.

UEFA has developed women's competitions in the strong belief that this will encourage the national associations not only to establish national teams but also to develop girls' and women's football in a wider sense. Shortly, all national associations will receive an invitation to enter the first European Women's Under-17 Championship. This competition will also serve as qualification for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2008. The addition of the European Women's Under-17 Championship is a positive supplement to the already well-established European Women's Under-19 Championship.

Our common challenges in the next few years are to focus on grassroots development for girls. UEFA's Grassroots Charter, which focuses strongly on recruiting more girls, is one of the

tools for building a stronger pyramid. Of course, football is as much fun for girls as for boys – and where a girl has no opportunity to play football in her neighbourhood, it is our shared task to encourage the clubs to include them.

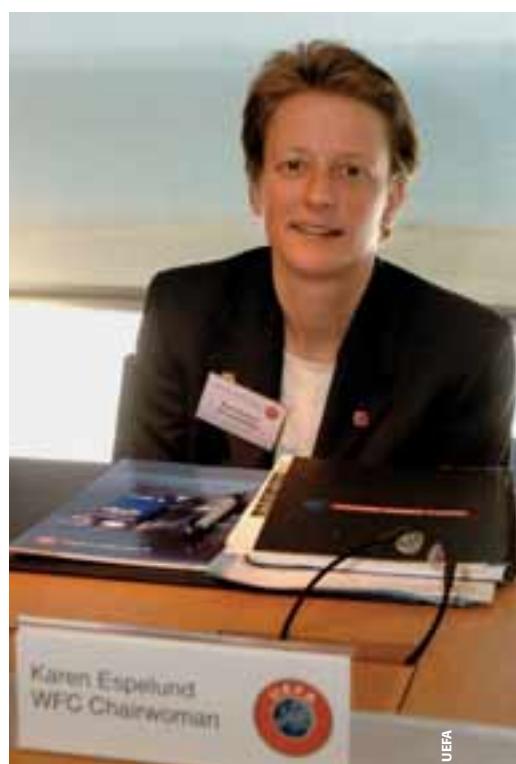
But the way they are included is also important. UEFA strongly recommends that clubs establish their own girls' teams. Of course, girls also can play with boys, but experience tells us that only the toughest girls will join in. By establishing teams for girls, the greatest possible number will participate. For the national associations, it is also recommended that they focus on the local and regional levels – in order to create local playing opportunities. A league can easily start with four teams playing each other three or four times simply in order to kick off a competition.

UEFA is currently staging a series of six regional grassroots workshops with the aim of focusing on how to develop the grass roots and how to educate more coaches, administrators and referees. At the same time, all national associations are not only being encouraged to organise grassroots activities but also to structure them in such a way that UEFA can endorse the work that is being done. This represents an excellent opportunity to focus on girls' football, where the potential for growth is enormous yet only small efforts may be required. The challenge is there for all of us!

Although developing girls' and women's football need not be the responsibility of women alone, football needs more female coaches, administrators and referees at all levels. In many countries, specific courses for women have been organised – and the feedback indicates that they have been successful. Associations are also being reminded that, where appropriate, UEFA can provide

support in the form of instructors – experienced men and women who are part of the grassroots team.

Developing club football is also essential in order to develop the game at both grassroots and elite levels – because most activity takes place in the clubs. Setting up action plans for girls' and women's football must also include the development of club football. To obtain funding, we either speak internally within the national association, or externally with the government or other authorities. This requires clearly defined aims and planning. UEFA's role is to support its members with further development. The tools include the Top Executive Programme, HatTrick funding, the Grassroots Charter, conferences, development courses – and tournaments. All of these tools are available and it would be a great pity if we failed to make the most of them as we work to raise the profile and quality of girls' and women's football.





**SOLVEIG GULBRANDSEN PLAYING
FOR NORWAY AT THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL ROUND
IN ENGLAND LAST YEAR.**

NORWAY A CASE IN POINT

**WITH SO MANY OF UEFA'S MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS MOVING THROUGH THE GEARS
TO GET WOMEN'S FOOTBALL UP TO SPEED, THERE IS PROBABLY A GREATER DESIRE THAN
IN THE MEN'S GAME TO LOOK FOR ROLE MODELS.**

Germany is an obvious focal point on account of results at club and national team levels but, in terms of social impact and the firm establishment of women's football in society, Norway has a story to tell. And, while the Norwegian FA's general secretary Karen Espelund and national team coach Bjarne Berntsen were helping us to compile a case study to post on the UEFA Coaches Circle extranet, some thought-provoking issues came to light.

The remarkable fact about Norwegian football is that 104,000 female players and 270,000 male footballers give the country of 4.5 million inhabitants the highest percentage of registered players per population in the world, according to FIFA's 'Big Count'. At the same time, attendance figures in the premier league have doubled in the last five years, with a 45 percent female presence among the spectators; TV viewing figures have trebled in the last five years; and, during the same period, the national association's income from sponsors has doubled.

The figures, in themselves, are impressive. But the knock-on effects are even



Lise Klevaness (Norway) squeezes through two German players during the final of the European Women's Championship in 2005.

STILL ABLE
TO MANAGE A SMILE
DESPITE COMING
SECOND.



more so. For example, the deep roots of women's football in Norwegian society mean that former players are increasingly working as football journalists, TV presenters, administrators or match officials. More and more politicians and people in decision-making public posts have first-hand experience of playing the game. More and more ex-players are bringing their daughters to football clubs and staying in the game as leaders, coaches or officials. Norwegian sporting law stipulates the presence of at least two women on executive boards. There is no discrimination in Norwegian football, in that girls and women are allowed to play against boys and men, irrespective of age. But research has established that girls remain active in football for longer if they are nurtured in girls-only teams rather than mixed football.

You might well ask what all that has got to do with the technician. The obvious answer is that more sympathetic ears are listening to requests for grants and funding – and that readily translates into more and better training and playing facilities throughout the country. And the structures in Norwegian football – and Norwegian society – promote regular movement of coaches between the women's and men's games in a period when the coaching fraternity is struggling to keep pace with the explosive growth of the number of players. Per-Mathias Høgmo, for example, left the women's national team to coach Rosenborg BK in the men's premier league, while the current head coach, Bjarne Berntsen, left Viking FK to take over the women's team in January 2005, enthusiastically grasping the opportunity to make his debut in the women's game and to gather experience at international level. As Gero Bisanz says elsewhere in this issue, Bjarne made no 'concessions' to the women, in that he has adopted the same training routines, tactics and strategy as he did in the men's premier league. He acknowledges that the differences in athletic power can gen-



Bjarne Berntsen, head coach of Norway's women's team.

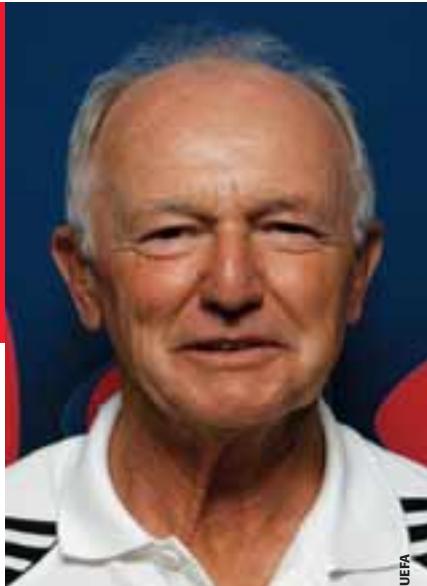
erate a slower tempo than the men's game and one of the facets he has tried to focus on has been the quality of play in the last third of the pitch, where creativity has to be synchronised with technique and pace and where the ability to see and to deliver the decisive pass has increased relevance. It is one area, he feels, where the virtue of selflessness is potentially a drawback. Whereas the women's team ethic tends to be equal to or greater than in the men's game, a degree of selfishness is sometimes a crucial ingredient in the recipe for goalscoring.

Another difference is that studies of injury incidence among top-level female players persuaded the Norwegian association to devise personalised training programmes in conjunction with the national Olympic association to make sure that physical preparation is the most appropriate for each indi-

vidual and that any athletic weaknesses are detected and corrected. In terms of workload, there are also evident differences. The players in Norwegian national squads are required to dedicate half their time to football and, as there is no professional league for women, this usually has to be achieved via a system of scholarships and work assistance. Players are expected to complete six training sessions per week (nine in the close season) in addition to club fixtures. The other observation Bjarne Berntsen made after switching from the men's game to the women's national team was about communication in the dressing-room and on the training ground. Although the messages are basically the same as in the men's game, the Norwegian women often prefer them to be delivered in a different manner. But that's an interesting talking point for a future issue...

INTERVIEW

BY GRAHAM TURNER



UEFA

THE ALL-GERMAN FINAL IN THE UEFA WOMEN'S CUP, ON THE HEELS OF LAST YEAR'S EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY FOR TINA THEUNE-MEYER'S NATIONAL TEAM, UNDERLINED THAT ONE COUNTRY CURRENTLY HOLDS POLE POSITION IN EUROPEAN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL. GERMANY IS THE OBVIOUS ROLE MODEL FOR THE 'EMERGING NATIONS' OF THE WOMEN'S GAME TO FOLLOW. AND, IN THIS RESPECT, IT'S NOT SO MUCH ABOUT SEEING WHERE THE GERMANS ARE NOW; THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO FIND OUT HOW THEY GOT THERE.

GERO BISANZ HAS THE ANSWERS. HIS REMARKABLE COACHING CAREER BEGAN WHEN HE OBTAINED HIS PRO LICENCE AND BECAME PLAYER-COACH OF 1. FC KÖLN'S AMATEUR TEAM AT THE AGE OF 21. AFTER GRADUATING TO THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM, HE WAS SIGNED BY HENNES WEISWEILER, HEAD COACH OF VICTORIA KÖLN AND, IN 1970, SUCCEEDED HIM AT THE SPORTS UNIVERSITY TO RUN THE FOOTBALL COURSES AND THE GERMAN FA'S (DFB'S) COACHING LICENCE PROGRAMME, COMBINING IT WITH TEN YEARS MORE AS COACH AT 1. FC KÖLN AND BAYER 04 LEVERKUSEN. HE RAN THE DFB'S COACHING PROGRAMME FOR 30 YEARS, BOWING OUT IN JUNE 2000 AFTER A FAST-TRACK COURSE FOR PLAYERS LIKE JÜRGEN KLINSMANN, MATTHIAS SAMMER, ANDREAS BREHME, DORIS FITSCHEN AND BETTINA WIEGMANN. IN THE MEANTIME, HE HAD ALSO WON THREE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS AS HEAD COACH OF THE GERMAN WOMEN'S TEAM AND HAD TAKEN THEM TO FIFA WORLD CUP AND OLYMPIC GAMES FINALS.

ALL THAT HAS CONVERTED HIM INTO SOMETHING OF A SPIRITUAL LEADER FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL. AND THE INTERESTING THING IS THAT, EVEN THOUGH HE STARTED BUILDING GERMANY INTO A EUROPEAN AND WORLD POWER OVER TWO DECADES AGO, HIS BLUEPRINT IS STILL LEGIBLE AND VALID. ANYONE TRYING TO BUILD UP WOMEN'S FOOTBALL COULD DO A LOT WORSE THAN TO LISTEN TO...

GERO THE GURU

1 • The first question is obvious: How did it all start?

"It was in 1982, when the president of the DFB asked me if I would build up a women's national team. I had to think about it carefully because I had no experience in women's football – neither practice nor theory. I was a professor at the German Sports University and in that role I had discussed women's football with some female students of mine. But that was as far as it went. I spoke to our men's national team coach, Jupp Derwall, and he told me I had to do it. He knew that the president wanted to build up women's football and he felt that a good national team was the best way to attract interest and help the sport to grow. So I told

the president I would do the job but asked him to give me a bit of time. That was in March or April 1982."

2 • How quickly can a team be built?

"In 1983 we took a big step because we were in the European Championship. We played against the Netherlands, Belgium and so on, finishing 0-0, 1-1...nothing spectacular. I was obviously watching my players very carefully in these matches and I soon realised that I didn't have much of a chance of helping them to develop further; I had to find other players but, because of my other duties at the DFB – including developing coaches for the national league, for example – I didn't have time to

travel the country watching women's games. So I phoned an ex-student of mine, Tina Theune-Meyer, and asked her to help me to scout for talent. I told her that we needed to find girls of 17, 18 or 19 who had been training for at least three or four years. She started looking in southern Germany and I focused on the areas around Cologne. By 1985, we had a group of younger players who we could prepare for international football – and Tina became the first woman in Germany to get her B licence, her A licence and the Pro licence."

3 • Looking back, do you think it was good strategy to give priority to forming a national team? What would you recommend other associations to follow the same path?

**TINA THEUNE-MEYER, THEN
COACH OF GERMANY'S WOMEN'S
TEAM, WITH ONE OF THE
COUNTRY'S BEST KNOWN WOMEN
PLAYERS, BIRGIT PRINZ.**



BARON/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Silvia Neid has succeeded Tina Theune-Meyer at the helm of Germany's women's team.

"Yes. Because at the same time, I was talking to the president of the DFB about the need for women's football to have a national competition instead of seven regional leagues. At first, the Bundesliga was actually divided into two parts because the clubs were struggling to cope with travel costs. The next step was to talk to the coaches at the clubs where my national team players were based. I got them all together and told them about the problems we had in terms of fitness and so on. I asked them to pay attention to specific details in training; to do fitness tests, speed tests and endurance tests. I could see what they were capable of doing technically and tactically but I really needed to know what their ceiling was in physical terms."

4 • What was the next turning point?

"The European Championship in 1989. The finals involved Sweden, Italy, Norway and ourselves, as hosts. We drew 1-1 with Italy. The game went to extra time and a penalty shoot-out,

which was really thrilling. We won it and got through to the final in Osnabrück on the Sunday. Our opponents were Norway, who were very strong at the time.

We had a fairly long drive to the stadium and the girls couldn't work out why so many cars on the road were waving flags. They were motivated when they realised the flags were for them – and even more when they saw a crowd of 23,000 in Osnabrück. I told them we couldn't have wished for better: good weather, a good pitch, and a good crowd behind us. The nice thing is that both teams produced a good performance – which was important because it showed the public just how good women's football could be. We were tight in defence; we worked the wings; we played combination moves, wall passes and so on. We scored two goals through good combination moves and Norway then pulled one back. It wasn't just the result that was important; we had transmitted a very positive message to the public and to the press. We immediately got to work on building another team – but we had already done some important work on building foundations."

5 • They say that reaching the top is difficult and that staying there is even more difficult. How did you manage it?

"Yes, we consolidated our status by winning the title again in 1991 and 1995. And after the Atlanta Olympics in 1996 I felt that I had achieved my target of building up the women's team. So I proposed that my assistant, Tina Theune-Meyer, should take over with the team captain, Silvia Neid, as her assistant. The proposal was accepted, so there was a high degree of continuity in coaching methods."

6 • How have attitudes changed? In the past, would it have been more difficult to persuade good male coaches to work in the women's game?

"I think that coaches want to work in football and, nowadays, there is certainly no shame in working in women's football. On the contrary. But when I started in the 1980s, I think it was true to say that coaches didn't want to work with women's teams. There was a strong feeling that it was a man's sport and not at all suited to women. Again, I would say that the national team's



SVEN SIMON

successes were the pivotal point, the fulcrum. Coaches began to realise that there were incentives to work in the women's game. In terms of coaching, there are no differences between men's and women's football. I always had the same demands and set the same standards as I had during ten years of coaching men's teams. Exactly the same.

7 • Do you think that Germany is a valid role model for other associations to follow?

"Yes, because Germany learnt from other countries who had had national teams for a longer time – the Scandinavians in particular. I think you always need to look at the established powers and see what you can learn from them.

8 • How do you see the future?

"Germany now has good Under-19 and Under-17 teams – and it was a very good thing for UEFA to introduce the Under-17 competition because it means that countries can now build really solid foundations. In Germany we are going through a period of steady growth with more and more girls of six and above making it clear that they want to play football. Clubs have a lot of new members. So we need more women coaches – and one way to do this is to educate former national team players and encourage them to do their Pro licence. But the foundations have to be laid on the pitch. Young girls must be allowed to have fun playing football. We should never reach a situation where youngsters don't want to go to training because it's too much like hard work. We have to give them a ball and encourage them to play. We have to create situations where they are upset when the coach calls 'time'. The aim must be to make them want to play even longer. That is the right atmosphere. That is the best way forward."



**VIC AKERS,
MANAGER OF ARSENAL'S
WOMEN'S TEAM.**

THE LADY GUNNERS

ONE OF THE ISSUES FREQUENTLY RAISED AT CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS IS HOW TO PERSUADE THE LEADING MEN'S CLUBS TO INCLUDE WOMEN'S TEAMS IN THEIR SET-UP. LAST SEASON, ENGLAND'S TEN-TEAM WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE CONTAINED SEVEN CLUBS FROM THE TOP DIVISION OF THE MEN'S GAME, WITH ARSENAL LADIES FC CLINCHING A LEAGUE AND CUP DOUBLE.

They are so much part of the scene that the ladies were invited to parade their trophies around Highbury when Arsenal FC said goodbye to their famous stadium in their final league match against Wigan Athletic. A couple of days later, the men's team headed for the UEFA Champions League final at the Stade de France. Among the expedition that travelled to Paris was Vic Akers, a man who wears two hats at the London club. He is the kit manager for the men's team and has been manager of Arsenal Ladies since he founded the women's team in 1987. In many ways, his story is unique. But it does show how, with the right sort of support, women's teams can not only be successful but also run crucial youth development programmes.

Vic, an Arsenal supporter, played league and non-league football as a left-back and arrived at Highbury in the dark days of football hooliganism when the English authorities assigned a community liaison officer to each club. That was in 1985. Two years later, he founded the women's team in response to requests from girls who, quite simply, couldn't get a game of football. Crucially, he received – and still receives – unconditional support from David Dein, Arsenal FC's vice-chairman and president of the Ladies' club.

It was Dein who stood by his 'women's man' when manager George Graham asked Vic to choose between his two roles. He listened to his heart rather than his head and chose the Ladies. Dein responded by making him the first full-time manager in English women's football. When Arsène Wenger arrived at Highbury a decade ago, he offered Vic a return to the post of kit manager, saying he understood how much the women's team meant to him. In May, when the FA Women's Cup final in Millwall clashed with a re-arranged league fixture against Sunderland, Arsène Wenger had no hesitation about giving Vic a day off so that he could be with the women's team.

"Combining the two jobs isn't that difficult," Vic says, "especially now that I've got my son, Paul, to help, and I have other good staff. In a way it helps to have a 'link man' between the men's and women's teams, because it helps the boys to keep in touch with the Ladies. They really appreciated that, when we played the FA Cup final, Thierry Henry and some of the others sent them SMS messages to wish them luck. We have always been made to feel part of the set-up. And when the men's team has done victory parades, on three occasions we've been in a second bus, right behind theirs."

Talking of buses, the women are driven to games on the men's first-team bus whenever it's available.

Vic has seen Arsenal Ladies blossom since "the early days when the girls could be seen walking round drinking pints of beer. I've always insisted on thoroughly professional standards – even though the women's team isn't financially-speaking professional – and we are very conscious that we have to transmit an image worthy of such a historic club. Over the years, I've recruited players by word of mouth and the standard has risen. When the FA formed a national league we were put in the southern section of a three-tier structure, so we surprised a few people by winning the League Cup in the first year and winning promotion to the Premier League. Winning the league the following season helped us to attract some good young players to the club."

Two years ago, Arsenal Ladies took a different tack by offering players semi-pro contracts, with eight squad members also working full-time within the Arsenal set-up. At the same time, the club has involved current and former players in youth development schemes, with Kelly Smith, for example, acting as assistant director of the club's youth academy, while other current first-team

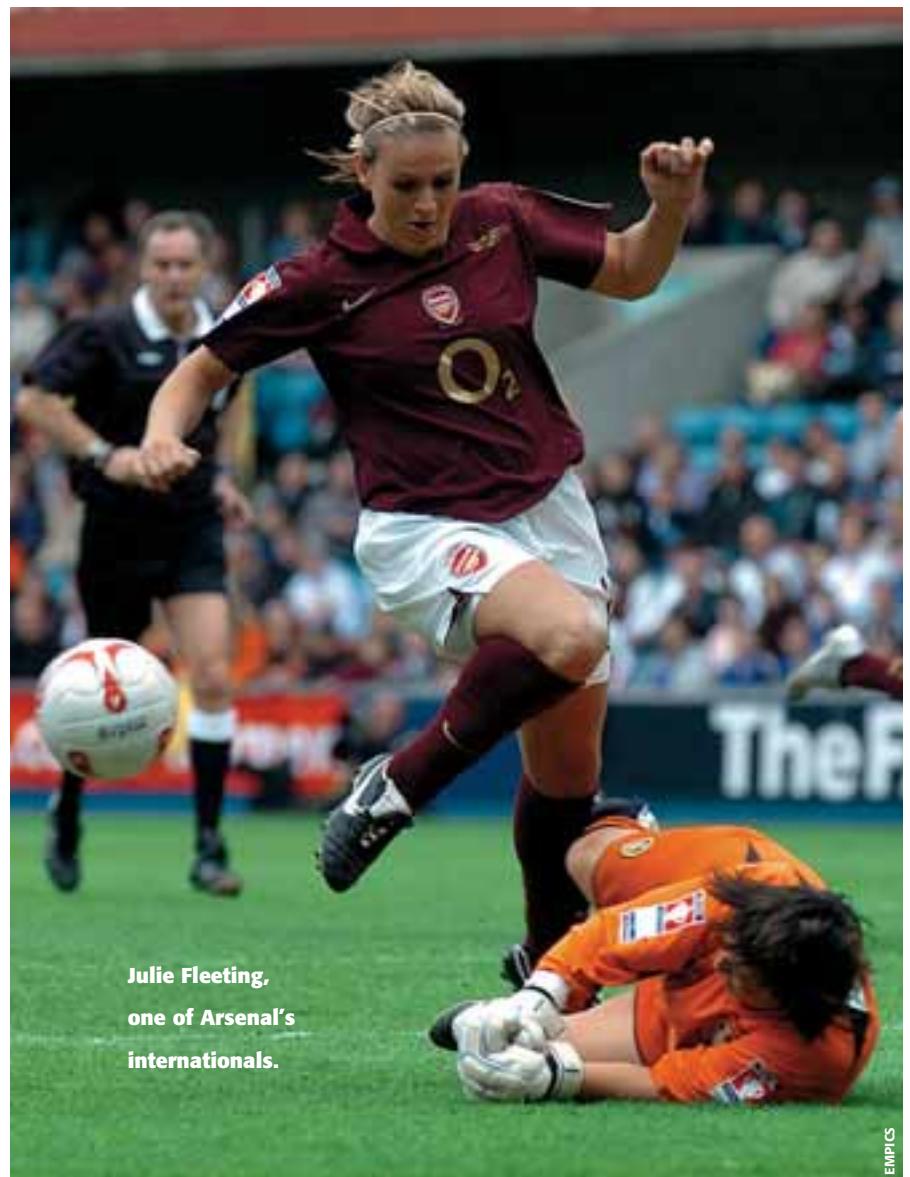
**ARSENAL LADIES
CELEBRATE WINNING
THE FA CUP.**



soccer camps organised by the club during the Easter and summer holidays. It means that young local talent is being groomed to join a star-studded squad that includes role models such as club and England captain Faye White and a range of international players that includes Julie Fleeting, the daughter of Scotland's former national women's team manager and current head of grassroots development, Jim Fleeting.

"I have some fantastic memories," says Vic Akers, "and I hope we can organise some sort of reunion to celebrate our 20th anniversary next year. We have

come a long way and we're getting quite close to the top teams in UEFA competitions. Obviously we have to compete at top level with the Germans, who tend to have a very different sort of set-up. Their clubs tend to be totally independent and stand alone. But we have shown that if you integrate women's football into a men's club and combine professional attitudes with a sport that is basically non-professional, you can not only offer football to a lot of girls but also be successful. Being the kit manager has been my job at the club, but the women's team has been my passion."



**Julie Fleeting,
one of Arsenal's
internationals.**

Emma Byrne works full time at the youth academy.

players Jayne Ludlow and Emma Byrne are also among the full-time staff at the academy, which allows girls to combine their football with a sound education. Last season, Arsenal's reserve team finished second to Southampton FC in the Centre of Excellence league.

Player development at the club starts in the Under-10 category, while girls from 7 to 14 are invited to take part in the



A COUPLE
OF UEFA'S WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL
PUBLICATIONS.

THE UEFA COACHES CIRCLE (THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL PERSPECTIVE)



The 2005 UEFA Women's Football Conference in Oslo.

AS PREVIOUSLY OUTLINED IN 'THE TECHNICIAN' (NO. 32, APRIL 2006), UEFA OPERATES TWO MAJOR PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT COACH EDUCATION IN EUROPE: THE UEFA COACHING CONVENTION (TRAINING COACHES) AND THE UEFA COACHES CIRCLE (SERVING COACHES).

To date, 51 of the 52 member associations have had their coach education certification programmes approved by UEFA, at least at B level, and these programmes include an increasing number of women who are holders of UEFA B, A and Pro coaching licences.

UEFA also organises a wide range of specialist events for coaches involved in women's football, including:

- The UEFA Women's Football Conference
- The UEFA Women's Elite Coaches Forum
- Technical reports and DVDs for the European Women's Championship and European Women's Under-19 Championship.

In order to improve the service provided, the UEFA Coaches Circle has

been established to meet the needs of active coaches working with national associations or top clubs.

This group already includes active national coaches of women's senior international teams such as Silvia Neid (Germany), Hope Powell (England), Monica Jorge (Portugal), Justina Lavrenovaite (Lithuania), Anne Noe (Belgium), Bjarne Bernsten (Norway), Elisabeth Loisel (France) and Anna Signeul (Scotland).

Members of the Coaches Circle have access to a password-protected UEFA Coaches Circle extranet, which provides a simple one-stop paperless reference point for the time challenged coach. The extranet service includes a range of benefits including training practices, video action, research reports and case studies.

There is also dedicated material on women's football, including a presentation from the German Football Association at the 2005 UEFA Women's Football Conference and a feature on the structural and technical development of women's football in Norway.



UEFA

A practical session during the conference in Oslo.

PER RAVN OMDAL, UEFA VICE-PRESIDENT,
PRESENTS FFC FRANKFURT'S PLAYERS
WITH THEIR MEDALS, WITH GERMAN CHANCELLOR
ANGELA MERKEL LOOKING ON.



DZIENBALA/BONCARTS/GETTY IMAGES

THE LAST WORD

Bids for UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009

Finland and the Netherlands are the candidates to host the UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009 finals. Site visits have been made to both countries and UEFA's Executive Committee will take a decision at its meeting in Iceland on 12 July.

UEFA Women's Cup Club Manual

Clubs participating in the 2006/07 UEFA Women's Cup will, for the first time, receive a UEFA Women's Cup Club Manual. This is a publication designed as a tool to assist the clubs who are hosting mini-tournaments or matches during the competition, with the aim of standardising levels of organisation throughout Europe. In addition to organisational guidelines, the manual contains suggestions for promotion and marketing, and offers participating clubs the use of the brand identity which has been specially designed for the final matches of the UEFA Women's Cup.

UEFA Women's Cup draw and workshop

The draws for the first and second qualifying rounds of the 2006/07 UEFA Women's Cup will take place at UEFA headquarters on Thursday, 6 July. A workshop for the hosts of the first qualifying round mini-tournaments will take place immediately after the draw. The workshop will cover various topics, including the organisation of mini-tournaments; promotion and marketing; and the provision of high-quality service to domestic and international media.

Format of UEFA Women's Cup finals

The Women's Football Committee, at its meeting in Frankfurt on 26 May, discussed the format of the UEFA Women's Cup final, currently played on a home-and-away basis. It was decided to set up a working group to examine

alternatives, with the aim of upgrading the competition in terms of pan-European promotion and strengthening the brand image of the UEFA Women's Cup. The working group will be formed by representatives from the national associations that play major roles in European club football, representatives of the Women's Football Committee, and members of the UEFA administration. The working group's findings will be discussed at the next plenary meeting of the Women's Football Committee.

Elite Women's Coaches Forum

UEFA is to host a second Elite Women's Coaches Forum at its headquarters in Nyon to coincide with the draw for the qualifying rounds of the 2007-09 European Women's Championship, which will be staged on 13 December. The first Elite Women's Coaches Forum exclusively involved national team coaches. But the second will open the door wider, to admit technical directors and club coaches in addition to the national team coaches.

The idea is to address various issues across a broad spectrum of topics related to UEFA competitions, player development, coach education, etc.

European Women's Under-17 Championship

Associations have been invited to enter their national teams for the inaugural 2007/08 European Women's Under-17 Championship, the deadline for entries being 30 June 2006.

The competition will be staged on an annual basis and the structure of the first edition (number of qualifying rounds, number of groups, seeded teams, etc.) will depend on the number of participants. The competition will also serve as Europe's qualifying competition for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup to be played in 2008.

UEFA Women's Cup sets record

A record crowd of 13,200 saw 1. FFC Frankfurt beat 1. FFC Potsdam 3-2 at home to clinch the 2005/06 UEFA Women's Cup with a 7-2 aggregate scoreline, Renate Lingor (2), Sandra Albertz and Kerstin Garefrekes scoring the goals when Hans-Jürgen Tritschoks' team recorded their 4-0 first-leg win in Potsdam. Conny Pohlers scored twice as Bernd Schröder's side tried to fight back in the second leg but they were beaten by goals from Steffi Jones, Renate Lingor (a penalty) and Birgit Prinz. "This was a tremendous advertisement for women's football," Bernd Schröder said afterwards, admitting that his half-time gamble of throwing on two extra strikers had "distorted our pattern of play in the second half." Asked whether the single-nation final was proof that Germany is 'untouchable', Renate Lingor commented: "It is true that we have very professional coaches now and that levels of performance have risen in recent years. But we mustn't forget that, two years ago, the final was between two Swedish teams.



DZIENBALA/BONCARTS/GETTY IMAGES

So it's wrong to say that nobody is capable of matching German clubs." Frankfurt's general manager Siegfried Dietrich added: "The record attendance gives us an incentive for the future and, with all the support we are getting from UEFA and the German FA, the future of women's club football looks very good."

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