

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

NEW ZEALAND FOOTBALL'S NEWSLETTER FOR GIRLS & WOMEN

females
in FOOTBALL 



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Welcome to the Beautiful Game



Welcome to the first edition of *The Beautiful Game*, NZF's girls and women's football newsletter. *The Beautiful Game* updates stakeholders on what is going on in the girls and women's game, around the country and at all levels.

Participation in women's football is experiencing continued growth, with the surge kick started by New Zealand's successful hosting of the inaugural FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2008, and the significant progress of the Football Ferns on the world stage keeping the interest high.

More and more people are aware of the global opportunities on offer through women's football and events like the U-17 World Cup have certainly inspired a whole group of youngsters to give football a try.

While the Football Ferns have notched impressive results over the last two years as they build towards both the FIFA Women's World Cup Germany 2011 and the 2012 London Olympic our age group teams have World Cups on a much nearer horizon after winning the U-20 and U-17 Women's Champions and qualifying for World Cups in Germany and Trinidad & Tobago respectively.

In this edition of the Beautiful Game we update you on the progress of all three of those teams while also examining the delicate balance of choosing between girls-only and mixed football.

We also look at the introduction of summer football, the launch of National Talent Centres and catch up with Kirsty Yallop, New Zealand's newest female professional football player.

Enjoy the newsletter which I hope gives you a greater insight in to both our national teams and the hard work taking place at the grassroots level.

Regards,
Bev Priestman
Women's Football Development Manager
New Zealand Football

FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup July 13 - August 1, Germany

All NZ games are live on Sky Sport

New Zealand v Sweden (Bielefeld) 12.30am July 14 NZT

New Zealand v Korea DPR (Bielefeld) 4am July 17 NZT

New Zealand v Brazil (Dresden) 12.30am July 21 NZT



Mixed v Girls-only football – making the right choice

How do we cater for the social needs of players, whilst offering them an environment that matches their ability?

There are approximately 19,000 affiliated female players in New Zealand and around 15,000 of those are involved in our junior and youth football leagues. Girls playing in mixed football leagues account for two thirds of that number, and when looking at this as a proportion of the overall figures we see that one in five junior of youth players is a girl.

The question is, if when and why should a girl choose to play girls or mixed football? Well, the answer largely depends on the player and their ability and motivational needs.

Some leading nations, England for example, dictate that girls aged 12 and over must play girls-only football unless given dispensation, but have over 150,000 female players. Unfortunately for New Zealand we are not in a position to offer our very best players across the whole of the country a competitive experience in a girls-only environment at such a young age.

When based purely on ability, the argument is for the best players to be playing in a higher grade of mixed football but there are



physical differences between genders and differences in the type of play to consider. For example 13 year old boys can play a long passing game with diagonal balls, whereas girls may not have the strength and passing range to do that and can play a much shorter passing style of play.

So at the lower junior grades the most talented girls (if they socially wish to) may be better to remain in mixed football. However, there are numerous studies showing girls' experiences in a male-dominated environment are often not enjoyable or beneficial so it needs to be addressed on an individual basis.

In some federations clubs enter girls-only teams in mixed leagues, which can address the social yet competitive needs of players, but monitoring is necessary to ensure the

most talented players aren't sacrificing technical quality football lower levels of boys football where it is more of a physical battle.

Long term NZF aims to address the issue by significantly growing the game in size and quality through the offering flexible and best practice playing formats. We believe that the quality of experience in playing sport is largely dependent on meeting both the social and motivational needs of a player.

With more quality players, girls-only football will feature more heavily in our game across the country for both social and talented players, as is the case in other leading nations, but we are not there yet.



Summer football – a new option

New Zealand Football is offering girls-only leagues during summer to entice more girls into the sport.

The number of girls and women playing football has been growing rapidly and there are approximately 19,000 females currently registered in the sport. Participation rates are even higher with a 2007/008 Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) survey finding over 47,000 adult women had played football at least once in the previous 12 months.

Numbers are expected to be given a further boost by the profile of the FIFA World Cup and the launch of the New Zealand Football Junior Girls Football Framework.

“The shift in season is aimed at giving more girls more chances to play football, attracting a whole new group of players to the game away from times dominated by other sports,” says NZF Women’s Development Manager Bev Priestman.

The approach follows recent surveys to clubs, players and non-registered players, and aims to offer games that will better meet the motivational needs of young girls. Recent initiatives aimed at growing the game – such as the NZ Football Girls and Women’s Week which provided great coverage and exposure – made it clear that the current format and opportunities did not meet the needs of all young girls.

Girls-only football has previously been offered in a few parts of the country but in varied formats. The new framework will make it much more accessible and in a consistent format.

It’s not hard to find success stories in the growth of the women’s game, especially since the success of the 2008 U-17 Women’s World Cup in New Zealand.

For example, in Wellington last year 32 new teams joined a newly established girls’ Sunday league. The timing solved the problem of girls playing netball on

Saturdays and being unavailable for football games.

Summer football will open up opportunities for players to play all year round and make use of better grounds (with fewer cancellations) and increase support from our best winter coaches.

Leagues will be held at one venue, will be double age-banded and girls will play small-sided games for longer, which will make it easier for clubs to form teams.

“We’re aiming to build momentum, breed a girls’ football culture and to get more mums to take up coaching too,” Priestman says.

The framework model will be piloted across some regions in October 2010 with a three-year progressive plan to implement it nationally. Over the coming months those regions on board will use the already established ‘females in football’ programme to attract new girls in to the framework through primary schools and clubs.



Girls and Women’s Week a huge success

In February 2010, New Zealand Football in conjunction with regional federations ran the inaugural NZF Girls and Women’s Football Week, which in total touched over 5000 girls and qualified over 200 female coaches and referees.

The week aimed to offer more opportunities for females to try football and to raise the awareness of Women’s Football in New Zealand, with a total of 70 events running across the country and with the attendance of our Junior Football Ferns at football festivals to inspire more girls to take up football.

Although the event was just over one week, it is apparent that such events do leave a legacy. For example in 2010 NZF has had more than 800 females through our introductory Small Whites coaching course whereas in 2009 we had less than 100.

Football Ferns – The road to Germany (and London)



The historic appearance in the final of the 2010 Cyprus Cup may still linger in the minds of Football Ferns fans but an even more important event is fast approaching.

The OFC Women's Nation Cup is scheduled for late September and early October with seven teams expected to travel to Auckland to take on New Zealand. A place in the FIFA Women's World Cup in Germany next year awaits the winner with New Zealand entering the tournament as favourites.

A return to the Olympic Games is another target for the Football Ferns and the qualification process for that is likely to be confirmed by Oceania Football later in the year.



While most of the squad has taken a break from team-based training in lieu of club-based or individual programmes, nine players already capped at senior level are currently getting a taste of a German World Cup with the Junior Football Ferns at the U-20 equivalent.

Wolfsburg's Rebecca Smith and new WPS recruit Ali Riley have been back in professional action with their clubs in Germany and USA respectively while Football Ferns midfielder Kirsty Yallop has joined the professional ranks by signing a deal with Swedish club Kristianstad. We catch up with Kirsty later in this edition.



Junior Football Ferns – New Zealand U-20 Women



Following the heartbreak in 2008 at the FIFA U20s Women's World Cup in Chile, where the 10-women Junior Football Ferns squad were just seconds away from earning an historic quarterfinal at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup until a 94th minute equaliser by England, the Junior Ferns have again qualified for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup which begins this month in Germany (July 13 to August 1).

New Zealand were dominant in qualification, winning OFC U-20 Women's Championship with heavy wins over Cook Islands (8-0), Tonga (11-0) and American Samoa (8-0).

The draw was not as kind to the Junior Football Ferns, landing them in the tournament's so called 'Group of Death' with traditional powerhouses Brazil, North Korea and Sweden.

But the current squad, captained by Anna Green and containing nine players that have played for the Football Ferns have a quiet confidence in their own ability to create some surprises.

The girls wrapped up preparations recently with a 2-2 draw with fellow U-20 World Cup finalists Switzerland in Zurich and a training match against Japan in Aufsburg.

New Zealand's opening match against Sweden is on Tuesday night / Wednesday Morning (NZT) at 12.30am live on Sky Sport 2.

For insight from inside the Junior Football Ferns camp, see interviews with head coach [Tony Readings](#) and with players ([Rosie White](#) and [Betsy Hassett](#)) available on the NZ Football website.

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New Zealand v Brazil (Dresden)
July 20 2.30pm local (12.30am July 21 NZT)





Young Football Ferns – New Zealand U-17 Women

The Young Football Ferns recently qualified for the 2010 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup which will take place in Trinidad and Tobago in September. New Zealand were ruthless in their destruction of their opponents winning all three matches, scoring 37 goals and conceding none. This included a record 18-0 victory over Tonga in their last match. Kate Loye was crowned Player of the Tournament and Hannah Wong won the Golden Boot trophy.

New Zealand have drawn Venezuela, Japan and European Champions Spain in their group, while Brazil, Chile, Canada, Mexico, Korea DPR, Korea Republic, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Ireland, Germany and hosts Trinidad and Tobago are the other nations represented at the 16 team tournament.



The U-17s train together in Auckland on weekends with girls from outside the region commuting where necessary. An 18 player squad is currently in Australia to play the NSW Institute of Sport and Sydney FC, and for most of the squad will be their

first overseas experience. The squad will continue to work hard domestically right through to late August where they plan to prepare with fixtures against fellow finalists in Miami en route to the World Cup in the Caribbean. For Interviews [Click Here](#).

The pathway: NZF National Talent Centres

Looking beyond the current New Zealand age group teams, the hunt is already on for the next crop of potential Football Ferns with the 2010 intake of talented girls at NZF's Perry Foundation National Talent Centres (NTCs).

The introduction of three NTCs centralised in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch earlier in 2010 is part of New Zealand Football's plan to speed the rate of player development and progress on the world stage.



Despite breakthrough performances from all teams in recent years, NZF is aiming to spin the wheels of progress even faster and NTCs are the first step in that process, identifying and nurturing talented young players from as early as 12 years old in preparation for age-group FIFA World Cups at U-17 level.

In practical terms the National Talent Centres will track, monitor and inspire a group of players, helping them on their journey towards playing in a FIFA U-17 World Cup and onto other pathways after those events.

With a small population, and thus a comparatively small talent pool, a key for the success of the New Zealand model will be keeping the identification spotlights shining longer, picking up more possible stars rather than showing them the exit door too early.

The inclusive approach will be coupled with intensive and high-quality instruction from national coaches, who in turn can shape their thinking further out from major events.

The philosophy is not so much "more milk means more cream" but "more quality milk makes more quality cream."

And more quality cream means more moments for Kiwis to be proud of on the world stage.

Selection for the programme

New Zealand Football will work in collaboration with its seven member federations to identify and select talented players for the programme. The identification and selection of players takes place prior to each centre and this is based on the summative assessments undertaken during the previous week long camp and through regional nominations and NZF talent on location days.

2010 NTC programme: Girls

Age Groups:

Born in 95/96: 2012 U-17 World Cup

Born in 97/98: 2014 U-17 World Cup

Date: October 4th – 8th 2010



Early this year you left New Zealand for Sweden to play professionally, tell us a little bit about the club and league you joined?

The club I joined is Kristianstad Football Club (KDFF), located in the south of Sweden. They have been in the top league for only 3 years now. It is a women's only football club, with a very nice stadium. The Swedish league is rated in the top 3 in the world – it's very competitive and it's great to play against so many nationalities week in and week out.

So playing professionally, how does that differ to your experiences in New Zealand?

Playing professionally is great all I have to think about is football every day. It is my main priority (like it was before) but I just don't have to worry about things such as work anymore as this is my job. I can train whenever I want, although we train at least once a day, sometimes twice. This is different to being back home where you have to juggle things like work school or

Five minutes with Kirsty Yallop

study etc while trying train and play like a professional. It is much harder to focus when there are so many other things you have to do.

Before you headed in to Sweden you had just participated in the Cyprus Women's Cup where the Football Ferns made the final against Canada. What was that experience like?

That was a great experience however I was really disappointed as we should have won the game. But it was a great achievement and next year I hope we finish at the top where we should be.

The Football Ferns in recent times have shown massive growth on the world stage, why do you feel that is?

I think the Ferns have grown because we now train and play like professionals even though not all of us are in professional environments. Back home we make the environment the best it can be and are constantly pushing and driving one another to be better. The coaching staff supports us so well and have grown our players in every aspect.

The Football Ferns are working towards the FIFA Women's World Cup Germany 2011. What are your thoughts going into that event should you qualify compared to 2007 in China?

Germany should be a great experience and we will show some surprising to some but not others, results. We have set our goal for the quarterfinals of that tournament and semi finals of the Olympics. These are our goals and we are on our way to achieving these. In 2007 it was about keeping it 0-0 at the half and hold out for as long as possible.

Now we go into games to win no matter who we play.

No doubt there are girls in New Zealand at the grassroots level who are aspiring to be where you are now. Why do you believe you have achieved the successes you have?

When I was little I always dreamed of playing for NZ and professionally. I worked really hard practising my skills and passing and everything. As I grew up a little I started to also train my fitness and strength. So I just worked really hard to be the best at everything football entitles. My family have also been very supportive of my ambitions.

In January 2010 you did a great job as a coach on the NZF National Talent Centre programme with our younger girls, how was that?

I loved coaching the girls! It was awesome to see and coach some of the girls that will go on to be Football Ferns one day. It was exciting to see the amount of girls and the amount of talent there was. It was a great experience and I hope to coach the girls again one day.

What does the future hold for Kirsty Yallop beyond 2010?

2010 and beyond... I'm not 100% sure. Of course I want to play pro again next year as it will be great preparation for the World Cup. My focus will be on the World Cup and Olympics these next 2 years and I will be pushing myself harder than I have before and work on everything that I need to so that I'm at my best for these pinnacle events. Other than that I hope to be having fun and enjoying life.

New Zealand Football would like to thank:

