

### 1 Warmer

1. What do you know about the history of women's football?
2. What do you think about women athletes earning less than male athletes?

### Women's Football: Then and Now

Football is one of the most popular sports in the world. Millions gather yearly to watch the World Cup, which in 2022 will be held in Qatar. However, people are usually drawn to male football. What about the women division in this well-loved sport?

There were a few women's football teams as early as the 1890's, when the sport was invented. The first official women's match was in 1895, and a few decades later, in 1920, there was an international game between the Preston team and a French team watched by 25,000 people. At the time, the Football Association in London banned women from their clubs, saying that the sport was 'quite unsuitable for females'. This changed for the first time in 1969, when the Women's Football Association was formed with 44 member clubs. China hosted the first FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991. Around 63,000 people watched the Final between Norway and the United States.

Women's Football has come a long way. In 2020, the FA reported that 3.4 million women and girls participated in the sport. Australia and New Zealand have been named hosts of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup – to be the biggest women's sporting event to date.

Despite these positive developments, things are not all rosy for female athletes. National-team female players don't usually receive the same pay as their male counterparts. This is something that Megan Rapinoe, top player in the 2019 Women's World Cup, has fought for. She and the rest of her U.S. team sued their federation and demanded to be paid equally as male players. Her message to other women is to keep fighting and not to settle for anything less. In May 2022, the U.S. Soccer Federation agreed to pay the men's and women's national teams equally. The U.S. Soccer President said that the agreement has changed the game forever in the United States and that it has the potential to change the game around the world. This has already had an impact in European Football as the Spanish and the Dutch football federations have also guaranteed equal pay for both male and female squads.

### 2 Understanding the article

#### A Choose the correct way to finish each sentence.

1. The first official football match between women players was in
  - a ... 1895.
  - b ... 1920.
2. Until 1969, the Football Association had
  - a ... welcomed women to their clubs.
  - b ... not allowed women in their clubs.
3. The first FIFA Women's World Cup was held in
  - a ... the United States.
  - b ... China.

4. Megan Rapinoe has fought for female players
  - a ... to get the same pay as male players.
  - b ... to get the same recognition as male players.
5. Now the US Soccer Federation pays
  - a ... all players on their national teams more.
  - b ... men and women on their national teams equally.

### 3 Exploring the topic

Find information online about tension between male and female athletes in one of the following sports: basketball, tennis, golf, chosen martial arts (e.g., fencing, karate, wrestling, MMA), surfing. Then complete the table.

Sport:	Male athletes	Female athletes
Pay / Prize money		
Endorsements		
Media coverage		
Social Media Followers		
Other		