

Women's football

Before you read

1 How much do you know about women's football? Do this quiz to find out.

- Women's football began in...
 - the 19th century.
 - the 20th century.
 - the 21st century.
- How did the Football Association react to women's football?
 - It supported it.
 - It made new rules for it.
 - It tried to stop it.
- The best women's football teams are in...
 - Italy.
 - the USA.
 - Brazil.
- Women footballers usually wear...
 - the same kit as men.
 - a mini-skirt.
 - long shorts and a T-shirt.
- FIFA does not allow women to play in a hijab because...
 - it is not attractive.
 - it makes playing difficult.
 - it is dangerous.
- Hooliganism in women's football...
 - is never a problem.
 - has been a problem.
 - will be a problem.



Reading

2 Now read the text and check your answers.



Women have played association football (soccer) for many years. At first, women played football in charity games and for physical exercise but all that has changed. Before the 1970s, football was basically a man's game. But now, in some countries, football is the most popular team sport for women.

The beginnings

Women's football had its first golden age in the UK at the beginning of the 20th century when some matches attracted over 50,000 spectators; this stopped in 1921 when England's Football Association (FA) banned women's football from its grounds. This ban continued until 1971. After the Football Association ban on women's teams in 1921, some women football fans created the English Ladies' Football Association.

The modern age

There was an unofficial Women's European football tournament in Italy in 1969: Italy won this

competition but Germany have won seven out of eight events in the UEFA Women's Championship. The USA won the first Women's World Cup in 1991. Apart from the United States and Germany, the strongest women's teams have traditionally been Norway, China and Sweden. Brazil is getting better.

The kit

A controversial aspect of women's football has been the kit. Most of the time, it is no different from men's kit. But in 2004, FIFA suggested that women should wear tighter shorts to create a more female appearance and to attract more male fans. Female footballers were not happy with this idea. In 2008 a women's team in the Netherlands made international headlines by wearing skirts and tight shirts. They wore shorts under their skirts.

In 2011, Iran lost their place in the women's football Olympics after trying to play in hijabs. FIFA said that the Iranian kits broke the Laws of the Game because they were not safe.

Hooliganism

And what about woman football hooligans? In 2000, during the Women's African Cup of Nations final, Nigeria scored a controversial goal that many felt was offside. South African fans began throwing bottles at Nigerian players and started fights. Riot police stopped the game. This kind of behaviour is not very common!

3 Read the text again and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did women begin to play football? Give two reasons.
- 2 Were the first women's football games popular?
- 3 What did women do when the Football Association banned women's football?
- 4 Why did FIFA want women to wear a different kit from men?
- 5 What did the Dutch women's team wear in 2008?
- 6 Why were South African fans angry in 2000?
- 7 Why did the police stop the game between South Africa and Nigeria?

Listening

4  **4 You will hear four girls talking about their favourite sports. Which sport do they like?**

- Speaker 1: _____
 Speaker 2: _____
 Speaker 3: _____
 Speaker 4: _____

5  **4 Who says the following things? Listen again and tick (✓) the correct box.**

	1	2	3	4
It's the country's national sport.				
It's the family's favourite sport.				
You can play with boys or girls.				
It's not very competitive.				
I don't play, I only watch.				
You can play when you are old.				

Speaking

6 Work in pairs. Discuss the pros and cons of playing tennis and take some notes. Use the following prompts to help you.

sport for life expensive play with boys and girls
 outdoors competitive/social
 take a long time to learn to play well

- A *I think tennis is a sport for life; you can keep playing into old age.*
 B *Yes, but it can be expensive and it takes a long time to learn to play well.*

7 Make a list of pros and cons for the following games. Then tell the class your opinion of different sports for boys or girls.

football rugby horse-riding swimming

Writing

8 Use the Internet to find out interesting facts about women in sport. You can choose football, tennis, rugby, horse-riding or any other sport. Use the questions below to help you.

- When did women begin to take part in the sport? In which countries?
- What about Italy?
- Have Italian women won any competitions in this sport?
- When did women take part in the sport professionally?
- Which countries are best at this women's sport?
- What do women wear in this sport?
- Is hooliganism a problem in this sport?

STUDY SKILLS

Writing summaries

- Read the source text one sentence at a time.
- Underline sentences which contain the main points.
 - Make a list of main points and number them (1,2, 3...).
 - Divide the text into sections.
 - Think of headings for these sections.
 - Write a one-sentence summary of the whole text.
 - Expand this sentence bit by bit, using the points you have highlighted.

9  **Write a text (about 130 words) for a website on women's sports summing up the information collected in exercise 8. Use the text and headings in exercise 2 as a model.**

