



A Beautiful Game: Internaitonal Perspectives on Women's Football

Jean Williams

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FIFA, the world governing body of association football, declared 'The Future is Feminine' in a 1995 press release. Since then, football has been claimed as the fastest growing participation sport for women globally. An estimated twenty million women play the game around the world, and that figure is on the rise. However, the history of women's participation goes back to at least 1895 and in our enthusiasm for the present, the memory of that longer history can be overlooked or forgotten. *A Beautiful Game*, supported by a two-year FIFA/ CIES João Havelange Research Scholarship, examines contemporary women's football internationally, with case studies from England, the United States, China and Australia. In each case study, Jean Williams considers the evolution of the women's game against a backdrop of issues, such as media representation, access to facilities, lack of resources, coaching, sponsorship, talent identification, training and professionalisation. The author examines contentious questions, such as why women are absent from the highest levels of professional football, combining source material from archives, oral history and artefacts. *A Beautiful Game* analyses the status and image of the women's game from the late nineteenth century to the shifting social values of the present.



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