

Fridays goes head-to-head with naysayers in women's football campaign

- Fridays has launched a campaign to tackle the prejudices that still exist in women's football as five women's football doubters get put to the ultimate 1-2-1 showdown
- Fridays aims to change attitudes and increase visibility to help create a more inclusive game for all



[L-R: Hashtag United's Gemma Abela and Rangers' Jane Ross take on naysayers]

8th September 2021: Fridays debuts its first women's football sponsorship campaign 'Celebrate the Game' today. The new campaign marks Fridays as the official partners for the women's teams of Everton, Birmingham City, Southampton, Rangers, and Hashtag United, whilst highlighting the misconceptions about women's football, as they tell the tale of five male doubters and put them to the ultimate skills test.

With record attendances at stadiums and new broadcast deals in place, this first weekend of the Barclays FA Women's Super League (FAWSL) meant more eyes on the sport than ever before. These exciting times for the women's game follow years of investment in clubs and grassroots. Yet despite all this progress in the sport, research has found that there are still high proportions of discrimination and prejudice against women in football. Recent reports even suggest that more than 90% of women's football fans have seen abuse against the sport on social media*.

This stark reality is why Fridays brought the campaign to life and asked women's football doubters to go on a 1-2-1 showdown against some of the club's star players, including Rangers striker Jane Ross and Everton's left-back Poppy Pattinson. The selected doubters were blissfully unaware about what they were getting themselves into, and were quickly proven wrong, as they went into a face off against the players. Each doubter performed a skills challenge against a player and were shown who really reigns supreme.

The 'Celebrate the Game' campaign is an important step in Fridays' sponsorship, as the brand is committed to positively campaigning and raising awareness of women in sport to help with the growth of the game in all areas.

Dan Staples, Chief Marketing Officer at Fridays, said: "We are extremely excited to be launching the first campaign for our women's football partnerships. It speaks to the core of what we are about and what we aim to do in this space.

"Prejudice towards women's football remains despite the high quality and growing profile the game and its star players now enjoy. Bringing the new Fridays feeling to celebrate the women's game, we truly believe that our partnership with the clubs will help inspire the next generation and switch perceptions for the better."

Presenter, and broadcaster, Jeff Brazier, lent his commentary skills to the campaign. Jeff, who is an ex-professional footballer himself, has worked as a UEFA B Licensed coach at the West Ham Women's Football Academy. **Speaking of his involvement in this campaign, Jeff said:** "Whilst women's football has progressed enormously and edges ever closer there is still a way to go for it to be equal to the men's game both in audience and revenue.

"The talent amongst these female players is incredible and we need more visibility on the sport. If I can help bring that in any way, then I will. If we can get more fans to the women's games then things will continue to push on. As a father of two, I hope this campaign will inspire even more young girls and boys across the country to get involved with the sport."

Fridays is all about celebration and that's why they aim to put the skills and talent of women in football at the forefront. Increasing participation in grass roots by providing young girls with the inspiration and equipment to play the game; creating awareness of mental health for women in the sport; inspiring coaches and referees for the women's game; and challenging the stigma, will be the key focus areas for all the partnerships.

To change the game, you have to be in it, so together both Fridays and the clubs will continue to campaign for a voice in the space, celebrating the excellence of women's football and challenging the negative attitudes. Helping secure more open doors for the next generation of women's footballers, as well as doing all in their power to make a difference to women's football, women in sport and individuals.

The latest campaign airs on all of Fridays' social channels today, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and TikTok.

Further details about the campaign can also be viewed at www.tgifridays.co.uk/womens-football

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ODCzga1yks>

*Research was conducted by #HerGameToo and was published in May 2021. More details at <https://www.hergametoo.co.uk/>.

*Data was compiled using social listening platform Falcon monitoring conversation around 'women's football' across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Follow @tgifridaysuk on social media to get that Fridays Feeling every day

About Fridays:



Fridays first opened in New York in 1965 with flowing cocktails and charismatic bartenders making every night feel like a Friday. Over 55 years later, we're making Fridays famous again and proudly celebrating our heritage with simple, freshly made to order dishes with top-quality ingredients, vibrant new and classic cocktails full of energy & theatre, all handcrafted by our expert bartenders. All of which is complemented by consistently brilliant and iconic Fridays service and spirit of generosity.

Whether you're out for a date, girls' night or a family dinner, Fridays is here to help bring that Fridays Feeling, no matter what day of the week or time of day.

Fridays is a proud member of The Responsible Business Recovery Forum (RBRF). The RBRF is a membership body of Out of Home food and drink operators and suppliers. The group's objective is to collaborate to aid an efficient, industry-wide recovery, in the aftermath of COVID-19 whilst anticipating future trends. A community of progressive businesses learning and sharing for past, present and the future.

www.tgifridays.co.uk

About 'Celebrate the Game':

'Celebrate the Game' aims to change the perception and attitudes towards women in football, which in turn will help inspire inclusivity within football and the next generation of women players in the sport. Fridays aren't just another sponsor on a football shirt or a brand that shouts about diversity in the game, then walks away. But rather, a brand working to positively influence women's football. The showdown was filmed at Southampton F.C's training ground

and Everton's USM Finch Farm and included players Poppy Pattinson, Grace Clinton, Megan Finnigan (Everton Women) Lucy Quinn (Birmingham City W.F.C), Jane Ross (Rangers W.F.C), Gemma Abela (Hashtag United W.F.C) and Shannon Sievwright (Southampton W.F.C) from across the sponsored clubs. Each sceptical football fan discussed what their initial opinions were on women's football and how they thought they'd perform. The football fan then partook in the challenge first, followed by our designated player in the ultimate showdown.

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