# Jelina Berlow-Rahman makes history as first woman to represent Scotland in international transplant football



Jelina Berlow-Rahman has made history by becoming the first woman to compete for Scotland alongside men in an international football competition, showcasing her remarkable journey from a long battle with kidney failure to representing her country. This significant milestone occurred during the European Transplant Football Championship held in Oxford, which concluded last weekend.

A lawyer by profession, Jelina received a kidney transplant in 2009 after undergoing years of dialysis treatment. At the championship, she was the only female participant among the teams from six countries, including England, Wales, Ireland, Spain, and Italy. Reflecting on her participation, she stated, “The last time I played football was when I was 12. I never imagined in my wildest dreams that I would be putting another pair of football boots on at the age of 46, let alone be selected as the first and only woman to play for Scotland Transplant football in the Europeans at an international level."

The Scottish squad, which was formed in November of the previous year, underwent monthly training sessions to prepare for the five-day tournament. Despite finishing last in the overall standings, Scotland secured a notable victory against Ireland, winning 8-1, which was a highlight of their campaign. Jelina featured prominently in three matches, including the match against England, during which she played in both midfield and defence positions.

Jelina described the team's camaraderie, emphasising the shared experiences of each player. “The team have been very welcoming and encouraged me all the way. We all had one thing in common on that field. We could relate to each other when we were exhausted and out of breath," she remarked. The bond among the players was strengthened by their collective histories of organ transplants, which the team motto encapsulated: participating to honour their donors and their families.

The team was orchestrated by Duncan Mcaulay, a former professional player and a support worker with the Inverness fire service, who had received a heart transplant two years prior. The Scottish squad comprised 21 players aged between 27 and 63, alongside coaches and backroom staff. The matches played were seven-a-side, with contact prohibited to ensure the safety of the players, and substitutions allowed at any time during the games.

Jelina's personal journey is marked by resilience; prior to her transplant, she spent four years on dialysis, attending Glasgow Royal Infirmary three times a week for extensive treatment. Her determination extended beyond her health, as she was granted special permission by the Law Society of Scotland to attend to her legal clients during her dialysis sessions. Throughout her career, she has represented various high-profile clients, including the family of Allan Marshall, a victim of death in custody.

The participation of Jelina Berlow-Rahman in the European Transplant Football Championship highlights not only her individual achievements but also the spirit of those who have experienced organ transplants, illustrating a powerful story of recovery, community, and representation in sports.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jelina_Berlow-Rahman> - This URL supports the information about Jelina Berlow-Rahman's personal and professional background, including her kidney transplant in 2009 and her career as a lawyer.
* <https://transplantgamesofamerica.org/european-transplant-athletic-championships/> - This URL could provide general information about transplant football championships, although specific information about the event in Oxford might not be available.
* <https://www.scottishtransplant.org.uk/> - This URL is associated with transplant issues in Scotland, potentially providing context for Jelina's participation in transplant-related sports events.
* <https://www.lawsociety.scot/> - This URL supports the information about the Law Society of Scotland, which granted Jelina permission to continue her legal work during dialysis treatment.
* <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/organ-donation/get-involved/organ-donation-scotland> - This URL provides general information on organ donation and transplant in Scotland, relevant to the context of Jelina's story.