# Nikita Parris hails surge in women’s football ahead of UEFA Women’s EURO 2025



England international striker Nikita Parris has voiced strong optimism about the continuing growth of women’s football in the UK, anticipating a fresh surge in enthusiasm linked to the UEFA Women’s European Championships. Speaking at the recent Big Football Day in London, a grassroots celebration supported by The Football Association and The National Lottery, Parris reflected proudly on the remarkable transformation of the women's game since her early years when opportunities for girls to play were extremely limited.

Parris recalled forming her own girls’ team as a child, after being unable to continue playing in mixed or boys' teams beyond a certain age. She described how, back then, she gathered friends, family, and even passers-by to field a team, highlighting the lack of formal pathways that now exist. Today, she observes a vibrant scene where numerous girls' teams flourish nationwide, enabled by initiatives like Big Football Day which encourages clubs to open their doors for female taster sessions, screenings of matches, and community celebrations. “It is so nice to see so many girls’ teams playing here... one of these could be a Euros star in the future,” Parris said, underlining the inspirational potential of grassroots football.

Big Football Day itself is part of a broader push to capitalise on the excitement generated by England’s triumph in UEFA Women’s EURO 2022, which triggered a doubling in participation rates among women and girls. Supported by The National Lottery, which has invested over £6 billion into grassroots sport over the past 30 years, the event aims to sustain this momentum ahead of UEFA Women’s EURO 2025, with over 200 clubs across England opening their doors during July to foster community involvement. The National Lottery has also contributed around £65 million over the past decade specifically targeted at growing women’s football, including funding for legacy programmes following the 2022 tournament.

Complementing these efforts, the UK Government and The FA recently announced a £30 million investment to develop grassroots facilities dedicated to women’s and girls’ football. This includes plans to build about 30 new 3G pitches with dedicated female changing rooms and accessible toilets, responding to the rapidly increasing demand for the sport. Such infrastructure improvements aim to make football more accessible and inviting, supporting both established and burgeoning female teams across the country.

The FA’s current strategy further emphasises equality in football, with ambitions to ensure girls in 90% of schools have equal access to the game by 2028. This plan also targets increasing the number of female coaches and match officials, with goals to add 1,500 female referees and expand playing opportunities through thousands of new pitches. FA Chief Executive Mark Bullingham has described this framework as crucial to overcoming existing challenges and maximising the potential of women's football.

On a European scale, UEFA has committed 1 billion euros over six years to support the development of women’s football, intending to create a professional environment with 5,000 players and six professional leagues by 2030. This significant investment reflects the rapidly growing popularity and diverse fan base of the women’s game, aiming to transform it into a mainstream sport across the continent.

Despite missing out on selection for England’s upcoming Euros squad, Parris expressed hope that the Lionesses will defend their title successfully. More broadly, she emphasised the importance of continued growth, parity, and support at all levels of women's football—values echoed by grassroots organisers, governing bodies, and funders alike. The combined efforts of high-profile players, national and local authorities, and grassroots initiatives aim to ensure that football truly becomes a space where girls and women can thrive, grow in confidence, and envision themselves as future stars.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/your-world/england-international-nikita-parris-continues-to-be-impressed-by-the-growth-of-womens-football-5212884), [[3]](https://www.englandfootball.com/participate/leagues-and-clubs/Female-Football-at-Your-Club/Big-Football-Day-powered-by-The-National-Lottery)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/your-world/england-international-nikita-parris-continues-to-be-impressed-by-the-growth-of-womens-football-5212884)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/your-world/england-international-nikita-parris-continues-to-be-impressed-by-the-growth-of-womens-football-5212884), [[2]](https://www.englandfootball.com/articles/2025/Apr/16/big-football-day-national-lottery-20251504), [[3]](https://www.englandfootball.com/participate/leagues-and-clubs/Female-Football-at-Your-Club/Big-Football-Day-powered-by-The-National-Lottery)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.englandfootball.com/articles/2023/Nov/29/england-womens-success-inspires-DCMS-football-foundation-FA-invest-30-million-facilities-20232911), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/67564700)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.thefa.com/news/2024/oct/31/fa-aims-equal-access-football-girls-90-schools-by-2028-20241031)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/uefa-pledges-1-billion-euros-six-year-plan-develop-womens-football-2024-10-30/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/your-world/england-international-nikita-parris-continues-to-be-impressed-by-the-growth-of-womens-football-5212884)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/your-world/england-international-nikita-parris-continues-to-be-impressed-by-the-growth-of-womens-football-5212884> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.englandfootball.com/articles/2025/Apr/16/big-football-day-national-lottery-20251504> - The FA's Big Football Day, supported by The National Lottery, aims to inspire grassroots participation during UEFA Women's EURO 2025. Clubs nationwide are encouraged to host events featuring taster sessions, match screenings, and community activities to promote women's and girls' football. This initiative builds on The National Lottery's £65 million commitment over the past decade to grow women's football, including funding for the FA’s UEFA EURO Legacy Programme after the 2022 tournament.
3. <https://www.englandfootball.com/participate/leagues-and-clubs/Female-Football-at-Your-Club/Big-Football-Day-powered-by-The-National-Lottery> - Big Football Day powered by The National Lottery is a nationwide initiative celebrating women's football during UEFA Women’s EURO 2025. From 2nd to 27th July, events will include female taster sessions, watch parties, and activities for all ages. Clubs and programme providers are invited to host their own events, fostering community engagement and promoting equal opportunities for women and girls in football.
4. <https://www.englandfootball.com/articles/2023/Nov/29/england-womens-success-inspires-DCMS-football-foundation-FA-invest-30-million-facilities-20232911> - Following the Lionesses' success in UEFA EURO 2022 and the FIFA World Cup 2023, the UK Government and the FA have announced a £30 million fund to develop grassroots facilities for women's and girls' football. The initiative will build approximately 30 new 3G pitches with dedicated facilities, prioritising women's and girls' teams across England, aiming to increase participation and support the growing demand for the sport.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/67564700> - The UK Government and the FA have announced a £30 million fund for grassroots women's football in England, following the Lionesses' success in UEFA EURO 2022 and the FIFA World Cup 2023. The fund will provide 30 new 3G pitches and facilities prioritising women's and girls' teams, with dedicated female changing rooms and accessible toilets, aiming to increase participation and support the growing demand for the sport.
6. <https://www.thefa.com/news/2024/oct/31/fa-aims-equal-access-football-girls-90-schools-by-2028-20241031> - The Football Association (FA) has unveiled a new strategy to bolster women's football, aiming for equal access to soccer for girls in 90% of schools by 2028. The strategy also includes increasing the number of female coaches and match officials, with targets to add 1,500 female referees and improve facilities with 4,000 new grass pitches and 300 extra 3G pitches. According to CEO Mark Bullingham, the plan addresses key challenges and leverages opportunities to transform the game.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/uefa-pledges-1-billion-euros-six-year-plan-develop-womens-football-2024-10-30/> - UEFA has announced a commitment of 1 billion euros ($1.08 billion) over six years to develop women's football across Europe. The funding, derived from competition revenue and investment, aims to support clubs, national teams, and both senior and youth competitions. UEFA’s strategy, named 'Unstoppable,' seeks to achieve 5,000 professional players and establish six professional leagues by 2030. Nadine Kessler, UEFA's managing director of women's football, highlighted the sport's growing popularity and diverse fan base.