

5 myths* about ... THE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP!

"She's not normal!" That's what everyone said about Brazilian footballer Marta, star of the women's game, when she started to kick a ball as a girl. Today, the FIFA¹ Women's World Cup is a massive event, but women's football still struggles* to be accepted. CLUB referees five negative headlines.



CLUB CULTURE: THE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2019

Age: 28, with the first tournament held in 1991 in China.

Dates: The opening match is on the 7th of June, with the final on the 7th of July.

Numbers: 24 teams will play 52 matches at 9 stadiums across France.

Favourites: The USA, who won it in 2015, and hosts France, Europe's best team.

Mascot: Ettie, a chicken (right).



1 "Nobody will watch it!"

CLUB decision: Red card!

British newspapers sent only three full-time journalists to the last women's World Cup, in Canada. They thought people wouldn't watch it. They were wrong, however. In the UK alone, 2.5 million viewers stayed up for the England v Japan semi-final, despite its midnight kick-off. So this time, hundreds of sports writers will be in France for the 2019 World Cup! The big brand sponsors* will be there too – soft drinks, sports labels, banks, energy suppliers and car makers all want to be part of it.

CLUB Prediction: TV audiences will be huge.
You: Has your country qualified? Will you be watching on TV?



FRENCH STAR: Amandine Henry

2 "There won't be any giant-killings*!"

CLUB decision: Yellow card!

There will be lots of fresh faces and new teams at this World Cup. Chile, Scotland, South Africa and Jamaica will all be determined to cause an upset*. Take Jamaica. They had their funding cut but then were rescued by Bob Marley's daughter Cedella, and now the Reggae Girlz (below) are heading to France – with nothing to lose* and everything to play for.

CLUB Prediction: Jamaica will reach the quarter-finals!
You: What's the best giant-killing sports event you've seen?



UNDERDOGS: Jamaica's Reggae Girlz

3 "England won't win."

CLUB decision: Yellow card!

After 90 minutes, England were drawing 1-1 with Japan in the 2015 semi-final. Then, in the 92nd minute, defender Laura Bassett scored an own goal. "I couldn't breathe when I realised the ball had gone in," Laura remembers. The team and the fans were heartbroken. The England FA² has poured money into the women's game over the last decade* at national and international levels, and England is home to Europe's only professional women's league. Can the Lionesses get to the final this time?

CLUB Prediction: They're good but not quite as good as France or the USA. England's women will lose in the semi-finals! We expect disappointment.

You: What's your biggest sporting disappointment?



ENGLAND DEFENDER: Laura Bassett

4 "There's no Messi or Ronaldo!"

CLUB decision: Red card!

Oh yes there is! USA striker Alex Morgan is in the form of her life, with 18 goals scored in 19 games in 2018. England have a world-class player in Fran Kirby, who is known as 'Mini Messi'. Just 1.57 metres tall, she won Player of the Year awards in 2018. And there are more: look out for French midfielder Amandine Henry, and don't forget Brazil legend Marta (right).

CLUB Prediction: Fran Kirby will win the Golden Ball for best player. Alex Morgan will win the Golden Boot for top scorer.
You: How many of your country's female football stars can you name?



BRAZIL STAR: Marta

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WORDWISE * myth (n): false idea about something
* **to struggle (v):** to find something difficult * **sponsor (n):** a company that puts money into an event in return for advertising
* **giant-killing (n):** when a 'smaller' team beats a top team
* **to cause an upset (phr):** to surprise people by doing something that nobody was expecting * **nothing to lose (phr):** to be in a situation when you have such a low expectation, that you can only do better
* **decade (n):** ten years

30 million women and girls play football around the world.



5 "Obviously the USA will win."

CLUB Decision: A second yellow card! Off!

The USA are the defending champions, and yes, they are favourites to win for the

fourth time. Nicknamed the Stars and Stripes, they look very hard to beat. But look what happened at the 2018 men's World Cup! Champions Germany won just one game, and Spain lost on penalties to Russia. Anything is possible!

CLUB Prediction: France will take home the trophy.
You: Who do you think will win?

France won the 2018 men's World Cup winners and received \$38 million. The winners of the 2019 women's World Cup will take home \$4million.