



# Women Empowerment Report 2024

Women Empowerment Annual Report 2024



**.WE** LEAGUE





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In preparing this report

On 23 October 2020, the Japan Football Association (JFA) and the Japan Women's Empowerment Professional Football League (WE LEAGUE) signed and committed to participate in the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), jointly developed by the United Nations Global Compact and UN Women.

The JFA and WE League are the first sports organisations in Japan to participate in the WEPs. By doing so, they demonstrate a strong commitment to creating workplaces and societies where women can thrive. They also aim to lead the way in the sporting world by promoting women's advancement within football.

While various initiatives have been undertaken both prior to and following the signing, we have decided to produce an annual report specifically to ensure robust, year-on-year tracking of these efforts in accordance with the seven principles. Not all initiatives yield immediate results, but the report aims to consolidate and powerfully advance these efforts, clearly communicate them both internally and externally, and track outcomes and challenges.

Taking the year of signing, 2020, as Year Zero, we have produced and published annual reports. Creating them in this format has allowed us to communicate our progress on this topic in a cohesive manner, giving us a tangible sense of reaching and informing everyone within the football community.

This year marks the fourth annual report. It has been a year of steady progress in some areas, while others have seen setbacks. Acknowledging these facts, we will continue to deepen our efforts step by step within the football family.

This publication lists individuals according to their affiliation or position at the time of activity or as of December



Greetings



MIYAMOTO Tsuneyasu

President, JFA  
Vice-Chair, WE League

Five years have passed since the Japan Football Association (JFA) signed the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). Using the WEPs as a benchmark for reform, the environment surrounding women's football is gradually changing.

The JFA Executive Committee (EXCO) members of this term, six of the JFA's 15 directors are women, achieving the 40% target proportion of female directors required by the Sports Organisation Governance Code. Over the past five years, more than 60 individuals have participated in the 'JFA/WE League Women's Leadership Programme', which cultivates executives and management-level talent. These participants are advancing their careers while contributing to the development of sport within prefectural football associations, the J.League, the WE League, clubs, and governing bodies.

Opportunities for women to thrive are expanding within the realm of football. Enhanced coaching development has led to an increase in female coaches obtaining the A-Pro licence, enabling them to coach WE League teams and players affiliated with WE Clubs, as well as the Pro licence, allowing them to manage men's professional teams. Furthermore, initiatives by the International Football Federation (FIFA) aimed at enhancing the value of women's football have seen female referees appointed for men's international tournaments. Research contributing to the health and performance improvement of female athletes is also progressing, among other diverse efforts.

While challenges remain, such as promoting women's football and expanding the WE League's popularity, we will advance the creation of an environment where everyone can demonstrate their abilities and individuality, regardless of gender, nationality, or disability. This will be driven by the dual pillars of the WEPs principles and the "Access for All Declaration" announced this April.



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NONOMURA Yoshikazu

Chair, WE League,  
Vice-President, JFA,  
Chairman, J.League

The WE League, Japan's first professional women's football league established in 2021, has now entered its fourth season. Empathy for the WE League's stated Mission – 'WE LEAGUE strives to promote an inclusive society, filled with diverse dreams and ways of living, and where individuals can shine, through the power of women's football and sports.' – continues to grow. This season, we are delighted to welcome SOMPO Holdings as our League Title Partner and Kracie, Ltd. as our Cup Title Partner.

Globally, women's football is advancing rapidly. The growth of the FIFA Women's World Cup, the Olympic Games, and professional women's leagues worldwide demonstrates not only rising competitive standards but also the significant societal impact of women's football as a symbol of women's empowerment.

In response to this international trend, Japan must continue striving to ensure its women's football possesses the competitiveness to compete globally and becomes an increasingly prominent presence. We believe the passion and brilliance displayed by WE League players on the pitch embody women's empowerment itself, serving as role models for the next generation and bringing positive change to society as a whole.

We are committed to advancing our vision, believing that working together across the entire football community – involving the JFA and J.League – to enhance the overall value of women's football will bring us closer to realising our mission.



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# About Women's Empowerment Principles

[ Women's Empowerment Principles / Weps ]

The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to business on how to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Women and UN Global Compact, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By joining the WEPs community, the CEO signals commitment to this agenda at the highest

levels of the company and to work collaboratively in multistakeholder networks to foster business practices that empower women. These include equal pay for work of equal value, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance against sexual harassment in the workplace.

## Women's Empowerment 7 principles

### Principle 1

#### ► High level Corporate Leadership

- Promoting gender equality through leadership at the top



Corporate leadership is a key and integral part of making gender equality and women's empowerment a top strategic priority. It publicly signals the CEO's and the executive team's goals and targets for implementing the WEPs and how the seven Principles will become part of the corporate sustainability strategy, day-to-day operations and organizational culture.

### Principle 2

#### ► Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination

- Equal opportunity, inclusion and elimination of discrimination



Treating all women and men fairly at work aligns with international human rights principles. It also translates to better talent acquisition, higher employee retention and satisfaction, increased productivity and better decision making. Removing all forms of discrimination in corporate policies, strategies, culture and practices is a solid step forward in a company's WEPs journey.

The WEPs establish principles for companies and various organisations. However, recognising that the JFA and WE League are organisational structures somewhat distinct from typical companies, the action guidelines for each principle remain unchanged, while the item names have been modified to align with the actual actions undertaken.

### Principle 3

#### ► Employee Health, Well-Being and Safety

- Health, Well-Being and Safety



Employers play a key role in preserving and promoting the physical and emotional health, safety and wellbeing of their women and men employees. Sexual harassment and violence signify high costs to women in terms of lost earnings, missed promotions and overall wellbeing. Companies are impacted in form of employee absenteeism and productivity losses.

### Principle 4

#### ► Education and training for career advancement

- Education and Training



Training for all employees about how the company is advancing gender equality and women's empowerment can align everyone around shared values and help ensure compliance with company policies and practices. Effective programmes to support women's professional advancement include education and training that is complemented by networking and mentoring programmes.

### Principle 5

#### ► Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices

- Business development, supply chain and marketing activities



Negative and diminished perceptions of women and girls are one of the greatest barriers for gender equality. Advertising is a powerful driver to change perceptions and impact social norms – portraying women and men in modern, authentic and multidimensional roles. Companies can also influence business partners through inclusive supply chain policies and standards of engagement.

### Principle 6

#### ► Community initiatives and advocacy

- Community leadership and participation



Companies are increasingly investing in community development programmes to make valuable, effective and responsible contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment. A key motivation is to respond to consumer preferences to buy from companies with gender-responsive business practices and who are actively supporting community initiatives.

### Principle 7

#### ► Measurement and Reporting

- Transparency, performance measurement and reporting



Transparency and accountability are required for companies to uphold their commitments to gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. Measuring and reporting mechanisms are crucial to monitor and track performance and progress. Business leaders and stakeholders agree that while not everything of value can be counted, it is difficult to manage what is not measured.

# The background & the purposes of the Signature

## Needs for the strategic initiatives to realise a society where women take active roles

On 23 October 2020, JFA and the WE League became the first sports organisations to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), publicly declaring their commitment to actively promoting women's advancement both internally and externally. ([https://www.jfa.jp/women/we\\_league/news/00025566/](https://www.jfa.jp/women/we_league/news/00025566/))

Gender equality remains a major challenge that has been addressed worldwide for a long time. In Japan too, the "society where women play an active role" has been a longstanding issue within Japanese society, and efforts are being made across society as a whole to realise it. At the same time, it is also a deeply rooted issue where progress towards improvement has been slow. As indicated by the Global Gender Gap Index (refer to the table below and the table at the top of the next page), relatively speaking, Japan's progress in women's empowerment remains significantly behind, ranking 118th out of 146 countries in 2024 (125th out of 146 countries in 2023), and it still ranks at the bottom among developed nations. Amidst this slow pace of change, some voices are heard questioning whether 'women's empowerment is even the right focus anymore'.

The reason we focus on this figure is that we suspect we ourselves, living in Japanese society, tend not to perceive it as much of an issue in our daily lives. 'Women don't really experience particularly oppressive or unpleasant situations in their daily lives,' 'While women's participation in sports and society isn't advanced, we think other countries are much the same,' 'In fact, we think Japan is an average or even above-average society'... When talking with those around us, we feel many people hold such views. However, seeing these figures provides a significant realisation: the situation we take for granted falls significantly below the global average when viewed objectively using the same metrics. This suggests we need to question what we consider "normal".

As with Japanese society as a whole, the utilisation of female talent within The Japan Sports Agency lags behind. The Sports Agency's 'Sports Organisation Governance Code' (for central sports organisations) states in Principle 2: 'Ensure

diversity in the composition of the organisation's officers and council members.' A target proportion for female directors (40% or more) has been set. Setting such target proportions is necessary to bring about change.

The situation around the football is much the same. Football is, in a sense, the quintessential male sport, yet it has a history of becoming a game enjoyed by women too. Globally, there remains an overwhelming disparity in numbers between those who play and those involved.

Within the global football community, 'Women in football' remains a hot topic, actively debated and pursued. Even in countries where women's advancement in society has progressed, it remains a significant challenge. Nevertheless, the sight of various powerful women around the world actively tackling this issue is tremendously inspiring.

Within Japanese football, there is also a shortage of female executives and female talent. As the central governing body, the JFA must strive to achieve the targets set out in the Sports Governance Code. This challenge is widely recognised in society, and it is true that efforts to actively recruit female talent have increased in various areas in recent years. On the other hand, we frequently hear that even when organisations wish to recruit, there are no suitable candidates, or that women are reluctant to accept such opportunities when approached. These aspects are also typical of this challenge. Strategic development and strengthening, along with a shift in mindset, are necessary to address this.

Global Gender Gap Index (2024) Scores of Japan

| Area    | Economy | Politics | Education | Health | Total |
|---------|---------|----------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 2024    | 0.568   | 0.118    | 0.993     | 0.973  | 0.663 |
| 2023    | 0.561   | 0.057    | 0.997     | 0.973  | 0.647 |
| Ranking | 120     | 113      | 72        | 58     | 118   |

World Economic Forum

## Proactive and ongoing initiatives, shared with the football community

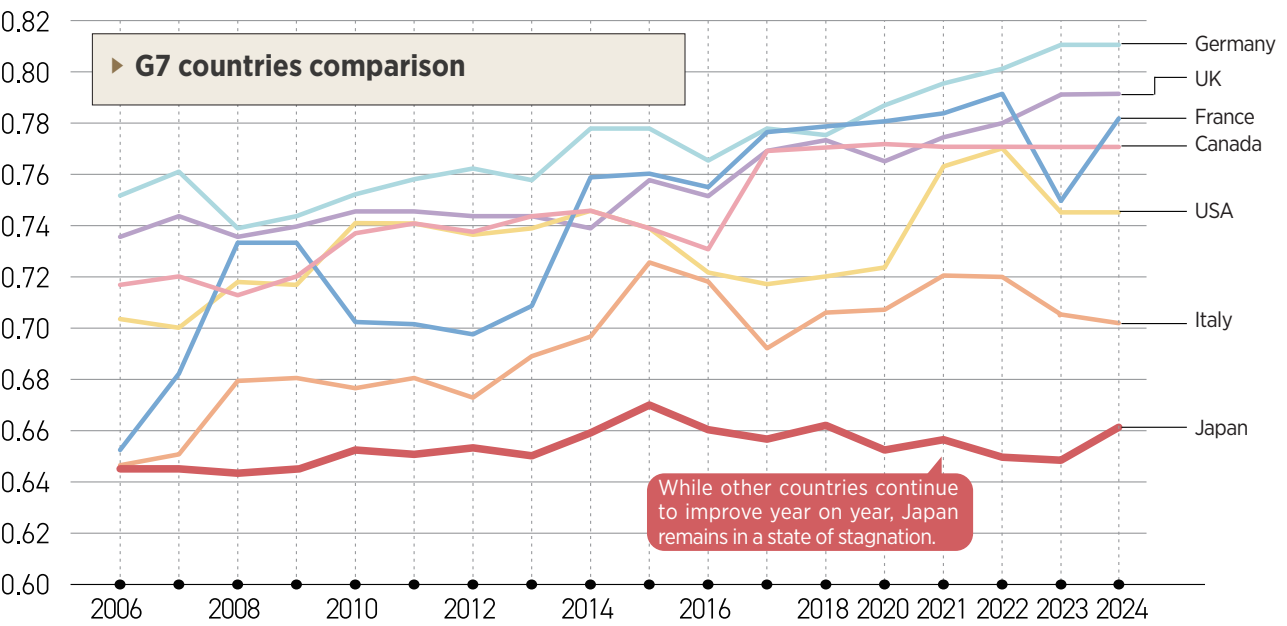
One such catalyst was the JFA's decision to establish the Japan Women's Professional Football League, the WE League, which commenced in September 2021. True to its name, the Women Empowerment League prioritises social significance, setting 'driving a society where women thrive' as one of its founding principles. It has also established targets for the appointment of female executives and staff. 'Leading the way' means aiming to tackle this difficult challenge by taking concrete action ourselves, achieving results, and thereby presenting these to society. While there is much debate surrounding numerical targets and systems allocating a certain percentage of positions, the so-called 'quota system', it is an important form of 'positive action' to gain the impetus for change. At the same time, to ensure it functions effectively, the league is committed to providing support, such as training programmes.

The goal is not merely "to include", but to actively practise the significance of diversity within football, to experience it firsthand, to make it the norm, and to communicate this to the wider sporting world and society. As this is a profoundly significant topic deeply rooted in society and culture, it is not something where simply initiating efforts will immediately bring about change or bring us closer to a solution. However, by steadfastly putting it into practice ourselves, actively attempting it, persistently and continuously working towards it, and widely sharing this with the football family, we aim to realise the significance of diversity and create a football world where it can be truly felt. It is our hope that by women – often described as the largest minority – realising this, we can contribute to the advancement of true diversity and the further development of football and sport.

Global Gender Gap Index (2024) Rankings of the highest and major countries

| Ranking | Country     | 2024  | 2023  |     |
|---------|-------------|-------|-------|-----|
| 1       | Iceland     | 0.935 | 0.912 |     |
| 2       | Finland     | 0.875 | 0.863 | ▲1  |
| 3       | Norway      | 0.875 | 0.879 | ▼1  |
| 4       | New Zealand | 0.835 | 0.856 |     |
| 5       | Sweden      | 0.816 | 0.815 |     |
| 6       | Nicaragua   | 0.811 | 0.811 | ▲1  |
| 7       | Germany     | 0.810 | 0.815 | ▼1  |
| 14      | UK          | 0.789 | 0.791 | ▲1  |
| 22      | France      | 0.781 | 0.756 | ▲18 |
| 24      | Australia   | 0.780 | 0.778 | ▲2  |
| 43      | USA         | 0.747 | 0.748 |     |
| 70      | Brazil      | 0.718 | 0.728 | ▼13 |
| 94      | South Korea | 0.696 | 0.680 | ▲11 |
| 106     | China       | 0.684 | 0.679 | ▲1  |
| 117     | Nepal       | 0.664 | 0.660 | ▼1  |
| 118     | Japan       | 0.663 | 0.647 | ▲7  |
| 119     | Comoros     | 0.663 | 0.664 | ▼5  |
| 146     | Sudan       | 0.568 | -     |     |

World Economic Forum





# The Role of the WEPs Annual Report in Advancing Women's Football

Seizing the momentum for the development of women's football worldwide

The FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023, held from July to August 2023, followed the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 held in Europe, setting new records in every aspect and achieving tremendous success both in performance and social impact. It was hailed as a tournament that proved the elevated status of women's football, being discussed not as "women's" but simply as "football", attracting new audiences alongside existing spectators. At the FIFA Women's Football Convention held during the final, the sentiment was shared: 'We must not lose this momentum or the new audiences we have gained. Now is the time! We must not close the door we have opened.'

In recent years, major European clubs have begun investing in women's football. Professionalisation and dramatically improved playing conditions have raised the standard of the game, leading to matches attracting large crowds. This expansion is not confined to Europe; driven by the thriving American women's league, investment is also increasing in South America and elsewhere, including the professionalisation of leagues. This is now beginning to impact the performance of national players and squads.

Nadeshiko Japan (Japan Women's National Team) reached the quarter-finals at the 2023 World Cup and again at the 2024 Olympic Games (Paris 2024). They were highly regarded not only for their performance on the pitch but also for their significant contribution to the tournament's success both on and off the field, exemplifying respect and fair play. Additionally in 2024, the Asian Cup and World Cup for the U-17 and U-20 age categories were held. At the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup the Dominican Republic, they reached the quarter-finals; at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Colombia, they secured the runners-up position, the Fair Play Award, and individual accolades. Many distinctive players are following in their footsteps.

Meanwhile, FIFA has published the second instalment of its Women's Football Strategy and the third edition of its report, "Setting the Pace" which outlines the development of clubs and leagues, to accelerate this growth. Seizing this

momentum in women's football worldwide, we aim to create a virtuous cycle for the development of women's football in Japan alongside the WE League.



**FIFA Women's Football Strategy:2024-2027**  
[https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/16fe7c8e9a285f15/original/FIFA-Women-s-Football-Strategy-2024-2027\\_EN.pdf](https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/16fe7c8e9a285f15/original/FIFA-Women-s-Football-Strategy-2024-2027_EN.pdf)



**Setting The Pace – FIFA Women's Football Benchmarking Report**  
<https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/4220125f7600a8a2/original/FIFA-Women-s-Benchmarking-Report-2023.pdf>

## The Development of Women's Football

Globally, women's football is said to have begun in the 19th century and subsequently gained popularity, with the first recorded women's match taking place in 1895. However, in 1921, England, the birthplace of football, banned the lending of pitches to women, and other countries followed suit. It was not until a full fifty years later, in 1971, that this directive was finally rescinded, allowing women's football to resume. Subsequently, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) officially recognised the first international women's match and instructed national associations to engage with women's football. Over the subsequent fifty years, the sport has developed significantly.

Similarly in Japan, records exist of football being played in lessons and at sports days at higher girls' schools nationwide from the late Meiji period through the Taisho era, though this subsequently ceased. The first match between women took place in Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1967, and registration began with the establishment of the Women's Football Association in 1979. Although a latecomer compared to men's football, it has developed to this point through the passion and dedication of many individuals. The Japan Women's Football League was founded in 1989. Building on this foundation, Japan became one of only seven nations to have participated in all nine editions of the FIFA Women's World Cup (then known as the FIFA Women's World

Championship), which was first held in 1991. Then, in 2011, Nadeshiko Japan won the World Cup for the first time. The Japan U-17 Women's National Team and the Japan U-20 Women's National Team followed suit, making Japan the first nation to win the World Cup in all three age categories.

## 2 areas to consider the women's football

When considering "girls" and "football", there are two distinct areas.

Whilst "Women's football" typically implies football played primarily between women, FIFA recognises two aspects: "football for women" and "women in football". Both require coverage and development.

Many people play football in mixed-gender environments, from the youth age groups right through to adulthood. Furthermore, this situation varies depending on age, timing, and region. When considering how to enrich football played by women, it is necessary to broaden our perspective and involve a wider range of people. The development of women's football is indispensable for further expanding football in Japan.

In terms of women involved in football, we must look beyond women's football alone and focus on women involved in football and sport more broadly. While the current focus is primarily on personnel involved in women's football, there are also numerous individuals involved across the entire spectrum of football. It is crucial to increase the number of people involved, including these diverse personnel.

While there is a call for "more women in decision-making bodies", we must consider how to make the sport more enjoyable for diverse individuals, including women. This requires diverse perspectives and mindsets – something that may well have been lacking in Japanese football until now.



Women's football is a matter that concerns the whole of Japanese football.

JFA has stated in its "The JFA Declaration 2005" and in "Japan's Way", published in 2022, that it aims to expand the football family and become the happiest nation in the world for football. Achieving this should become more attainable as more women, who originally numbered the same as men, become involved. The preamble to the "Nadeshiko Vision", set forth by the JFA Women's Committee, states as follows:

To materialize the "Japanese Ideal, Vision & Pledge", and to shape the women's football culture, in perspective of "NADESHIKO" comes to be recognized in the world, Hereby we set three targets which shall be shared and performed by all people who play each role in each field of football in Japan.

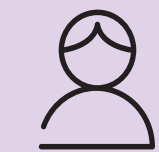
Women's football exists not solely for women's football, but as part of Japanese football as a whole, to be shared and pursued by all those involved. Furthermore, the subsequent text states as follows:

- and realise the society in which women can shine
- Realise society in which women play active roles in every scene of football & sports and reach great potential
- Women's football to contribute to the developments of football, sports and society of Japan, Asia and the world, through its unique value

It is imperative that women become involved not only in decision-making bodies but in every aspect of football, enabling them to fully utilise their capabilities. We must enhance and communicate the intrinsic value of women's football – not merely a miniature version of men's football – thereby contributing to the advancement of Japanese football.

The year 2024 has been one where, whilst progress has been made in some areas, setbacks have also occurred, reminding us anew of the fundamental challenges inherent in this task. Now that we stand at a major juncture in the development of women's football worldwide, we earnestly hope that the information presented in this WEPs Annual Report will reach a wider audience, spark broader action, and serve as a catalyst towards realising all the objectives outlined above.





# Promoting gender equality through leadership at the top management

## JFA NADESHIKO vision

Following "The JFA Declaration,2005" the Nadeshiko Vision was formulated in 2007 as a blueprint for developing women's football. It has been regularly revised since.

The 2015 revision added the following phrase regarding women's advancement.

A further revision was made in 2022, bringing it to its current form.



JFA official Web-site

[https://www.jfa.jp/women/nadeshiko\\_vision/](https://www.jfa.jp/women/nadeshiko_vision/)

### and realise the society in which women can shine

- Realise society in which women play active roles in every scene of football & sports and reach great potential
- Women's football to contribute to the developments of football, sports and society of Japan, Asia and the world, through its unique value

## JFA JFA Executive Committee

In the April 2024 the election of the president, the new structure achieved a 40% representation of female EXCO members on the JFA Board (six out of fifteen members).



JFA official Web-site

[https://www.jfa.jp/about\\_jfa/organization/jfa\\_structure/excutive\\_committee.html](https://www.jfa.jp/about_jfa/organization/jfa_structure/excutive_committee.html)

## JFA JFA Women's Football Day

The United Nations (UN) designates 8 March each year as International Women's Day. Since 2019,JFA has designated this day as "JFA Women's Football Day". Under the slogan "Let's become the fairest country in the world", the JFA is undertaking initiatives on both the social and promotional fronts to advance women's football and women's empowerment. The JFA has also called upon all 47 prefectural football associations to engage in activities.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has also designated a day for activities related to women's football across Asia, known as 'Women's Football Day', preceding the JFA's initiative.

In March 2024, we collaborated not only with the JFA, the WE League, the Nadeshiko League, the Women's F.League, and the All Japan University Women's Football Federation, but

also with various other federations including the Japan Beach Soccer Federation, the Japan Disabled Football Federation, the Japan Football League, and the F.League.



JFA official Web-site

<https://www.jfa.jp/women/womensfootballday2024/>

## ▶ JFA Women's Football Day all over Japan

Every year at this time, women's football events are held by prefectural football associations across the nation.



Additionally, this year we implemented various initiatives in collaboration with women's ball sports and team competitions as a new approach.



## ▶ The Progress and Future of Women's Sport" Online Panel Discussion

A panel discussion was held with representatives from various women's sports, sharing the current state and challenges faced by each discipline to explore what can be done to establish women's sport as a cultural norm. We considered a future where everyone can share the joy and pleasure of sport, transcending the boundaries of individual sports, to realise an environment where women can enjoy sport throughout their lives.



JFA official Web-site

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_qpak4mSt4&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_qpak4mSt4&t=3s)



WBFJ official Web-site

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbCHTS2EHkc>

● Date : 2024/3/5/ TUE 12 : 15-

● Panelists

JFA GS  
MIYAMOTO Tsuneyasu

WE League Chair  
TAKATA Haruna

Japan Rugby Football Union Vice president  
ASAMI Keiko

Japan Women's Baseball Federation President  
YAMADA Hiroko

## ▶ JFA Women's Football Day 2024 Multi-Sports Festival

Working to create an environment where everyone can participate in sport regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or disability status, we aimed to promote women's sport and expand opportunities for participation. To this end, we held an event in collaboration with football, rugby, and baseball organisations. This event provided opportunities to encounter and experience various sports, allowing participants to personally experience the enjoyment of sport and the pleasure of physical activity.

● Date : 2024/3/16/ Sat.

● Venue : JFA Yume Field



JFA official X

[https://x.com/jfa\\_nadeshiko/status/1771078141144142168](https://x.com/jfa_nadeshiko/status/1771078141144142168)



©JFA/PR



## JFA WE LEAGUE WE League Launched

Under the slogan ‘This is a new kick-off for Japan,’ the WE League was established on 1 July 2020. Its name stands for ‘Women Empowerment League.’ Centred around the league, it is Japan’s first professional women’s football league, aiming for a society where all of us involved (WE) play a leading role. Then, on 12 September 2021, the Yogiho WE League commenced, striving to become the world’s premier women’s football league both in play and in social contribution. From Sendai in the north to Hiroshima in the south, eleven clubs from nine prefectures participated. The league comprised nine clubs from the Plenus Nadeshiko League and two newly established women’s teams. Omiya Ardija and Sanfrecce Hiroshima, which previously only had men’s teams, established women’s teams specifically for the WE League’s formation.

Another defining feature of the WE League is its adoption of an autumn-spring season schedule, aligning with major European and American seasons. In Europe, driven by gender equality considerations, many major clubs have rapidly increased their establishment of women’s teams in recent years.

The UEFA Women’s Champions League quarter-final between



© WE LEAGUE

FC Barcelona and Real Madrid in December 2024 drew a crowd of 91,533 spectators. In the United States, following players’ campaigns for equal pay, the US Soccer Federation reached agreement with both the men’s and women’s players’ associations on a new collective bargaining agreement stipulating equal remuneration for women’s players representing the national team. Amidst the rising global value of women’s football, expectations are high for the WE League within Japanese women’s football, a sport that has conquered the FIFA Women’s World Cup across all generations.

INAC KOBE LEONESSA claimed the inaugural 2021/22 season title. At the WE League Awards, INAC KOBE players, dressed in distinctive outfits, lifted the WE League trophy, the “Women Empowerment Trophy”.

From the third season, 2023/24, the league expanded to 12 teams with the addition of CEREZO OSAKA YANMAR LADIES.



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## JFA WE LEAGUE Name and Logo of WE League



WE League is an abbreviation for ‘Women Empowerment League’. This name embodies our aspiration for a society where the profession of ‘women’s professional football player’ is established in Japan, where women can dream of becoming ‘football players’, and where all of us involved (WE) can play leading roles.

Furthermore, the brand motif ‘●’ (dot) represents ‘the dynamism of football’, ‘new connections’, and ‘the future of Japan’.

## JFA WE LEAGUE WE League Mission & Vision

The WE League upholds the philosophy that ‘WE LEAGUE strives to promote an inclusive society, filled with diverse dreams and ways of living, and where individuals can shine, through the power of women’s football and sports.’ To embody this philosophy, as a commitment to it, not only must each member of the league make a declaration of intent towards advancing the philosophy, but each and every club must do so for each and every player.

The realisation of our philosophy requires two essential elements: football operations, encompassing the

### Mission

WE LEAGUE strives to promote an inclusive society, filled with diverse dreams and ways of living, and where individuals can shine, through the power of women’s football and sports.

### VISION 1

- Hosting the world’s top players and maintaining the highest level of competition. Producing the world’s top players and staff.
- Raising the quality of women’s football in Japan through grassroots development.
- Increasing access for girls and women to be able to enjoy football in Japan.

[football operations]  
**VISION 1**  
To host the best women’s football in the world.

[social initiatives]  
**VISION 2**  
To be the most active women’s community in the world.

[operational foundation]  
**VISION 3**  
To be the most valuable league in the world.

### VISION 2

- Encouraging women to be the starting point and the driving force for positive change throughout society.
- Becoming a platform that brings together individuals, organisations and companies, that exist beyond the world of sports.

### VISION 3

- Establishing a strong foundation that would support the development of both the physical(competition) and social-cooperate elements of the organisational mission.
- Proving the profitability of professional women’s football.
- Becoming a societal role model in promoting equity, diversity and inclusion at the workplace and beyond.

## JFA WE LEAGUE Entry criteria established to advance our mission

To promote the league’s philosophy, the following entry criteria have been established (excerpting the sections pertaining to the philosophy).

### [Appointment of Women in Personnel Constituting the Organisation]

At least 50% of the officers and staff constituting the organisation operating the club shall be women. Where multiple teams are operated within the same organisation, the specific organisational unit operating the club must be clearly identified (to be achieved within three years of joining).

### [Appointment of Women to Executive Positions]

At least one individual involved in the club’s decision-making shall be a woman (preferably at the level of director or above).

### [ Top Team and Academy Team Staff ]

The coaching staff (manager or coach) must include at least one female coach.

### [ Provision of Childcare Facilities ]

A breastfeeding room and childcare facilities must be provided at the home stadium.

## JFA WE LEAGUE WE League CREDO (Code of Conduct)

In August 2021, we announced the WE League Credo (Code of Conduct). Chairperson OKAJIMA Kikuko and eleven player representatives from each club gathered. Starting with the inaugural WEMEETING held on 8 March, International Women’s Day/JFA Women’s Football Day, they engaged in extensive discussions within their clubs. Over five months, they collectively decided on the words ‘Playing so everyone can be the protagonist’ as their Credo. This phrase was read aloud by each club’s captain as the players’ pledge at their home opening matches for the 2021/22 season.



### WE PROMISE

We create a future where  
● everyone is able to go after their dreams.  
● everyone can be inspired by.  
● everyone treats each other with respect and love.  
WE PLAY EVERY GAME, SO THAT EVERYONE CAN BE A HERO.



WE LEAGUE official YouTube

Making of the Credo  
<https://youtu.be/9sJso6D7jvM>

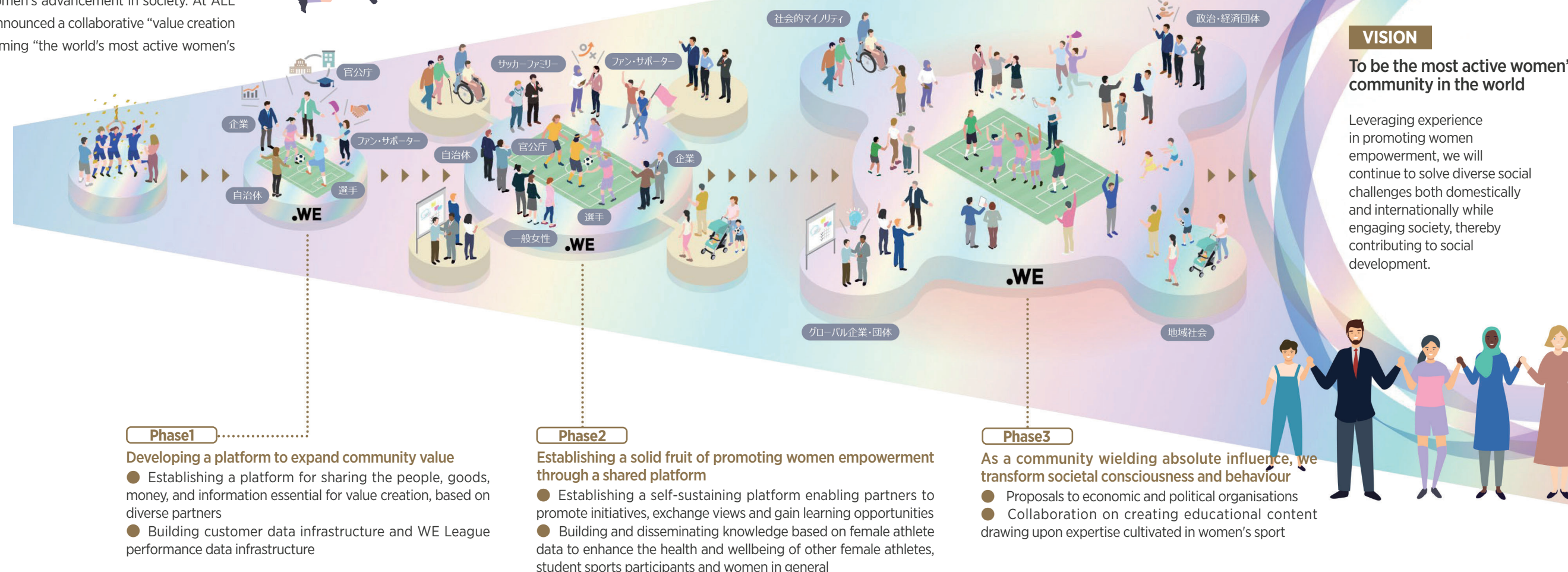


## WE The Value Creation Story

WE League has entered into a Social Impact Partnership agreement with KPMG Consulting Co.,Ltd. to support activities aimed at realising social change, positioning itself as an engine driving women's advancement in society. At ALL WE ACTION DAY, it announced a collaborative "value creation story" aimed at becoming "the world's most active women's community".



WE LEAGUE strives to promote an inclusive society, filled with diverse dreams and ways of living, and where individuals can shine, through the power of women's football and sports.



## WE "ALL WE ACTION DAY"

Until the 2022/23 season, each club independently organised its own "WE ACTION DAY" during match-free weeks. From the 2023/24 season, as a new initiative, all clubs and the WE League collaborated to implement this as "ALL WE ACTION DAY". The 'ALL WE ACTION DAY' held during the 2023/24 season comprised a WE League talk event in Shibuya and each club's own unique WE ACTION DAY activities. The Shibuya talk event, themed 'Sharing diverse stories of women's empowerment through "MY STORY" WE League players', featured 12 players from all clubs sharing their personal stories before an audience of approximately 90 people.

In the first part, KPMG Consulting Co.,Ltd. the WE League's Social Impact Partner, and the WE League jointly presented the 'Value Creation Story', developed over several months. This 'Value Creation Story' visually explains the phases through which the WE League, as a professional football organisation, can create 'the world's most active women's community'. Mr SADO Makoto, Executive Officer and Partner at KPMG, and TAKATA Haruna, then WE League Chair, engaged in a dialogue format, discussing initiatives such as 'establishing a platform to expand community value' and 'building a solid track record in promoting women's advancement'. Additionally, a talk session was held in the

second part. Twelve players from all clubs participated, sharing their personal stories on topics such as: 'Challenges experienced during their sporting careers,' 'Changes they wish to see to create an environment where female athletes can more easily continue competing,' and 'Their desired future selves and the efforts they are making towards that goal.' The discussion included comments from KAIHORI Ayumi, WE League Community Organiser and MC, and saw the athletes exchange views amongst themselves. It provided a valuable opportunity to learn the stories behind these 12 athletes.



© WE LEAGUE



## **.WE** “WE ACTION DAY” toward the Mission

WE ACTION DAY, an initiative to promote core values. Clubs and regions leverage their unique characteristics to engage in diverse activities, collectively reflecting upon and embodying the league's cherished principles. For the 2023/24 season, alongside each club holding one event, an ‘ALL WE ACTION DAY’ was also implemented, where the league and all clubs conducted activities on the same day. These activities have significantly expanded, including the inaugural overseas event. The WE League Awards recognise the ‘MOST IMPRESSIVE WE ACTION DAY’, with the 2023/24 season seeing this year,

OMIYA ARDIJA VENTUS, which held a ‘Blind Football & Sign Language Experience Session’ to deepen understanding of normalisation, has been awarded.



Photo provided by WE LEAGUE



WE LEAGUE official YouTube  
2023-24 WE ACTION DAY  
<https://youtu.be/S4usLQKDzFU>

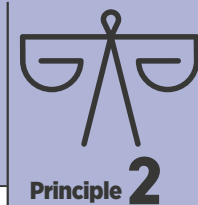
## **.WE** “WE LEAGUE TROPHY” for the champion

The WE League, aiming to realise a society where every individual shines, has broken with long-standing conventions to create the Women Empowerment Trophy, symbolising “future potential” and “empowerment”. The WE League Trophy began its creation with founding Chairperson OKAJIMA Kikuko and female players and representatives from various generations of Japanese women's football smashing an invisible “glass wall” they themselves had encountered, using a football. Female glass artisans and designers then completed the trophy using the broken glass fragments. Furthermore, the trophy's making-of film was produced entirely by a female staff team, including the creative director, producer, director, camerawoman, and music composer. The inaugural champions were INAC KOBE LEONESSA. MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES URAWA REDS LADIES achieved back-to-back victories in the second season (2022/23) and third season (2023/24), lifting the WE League Trophy.



WE LEAGUE official YouTube  
WE LEAGUE TROPHY - Breaking the glass wall  
<https://youtu.be/CLIsDanQgKc>

### Activity Reports



## Equal opportunity, inclusion and elimination of discrimination

### **JFA** The Declaration, Access For All

Following a proposal at the EXCO meeting in March 2023, a working group was formed to examine the matter. In April 2024, a joint declaration was issued by representatives from the JFA, J.League, WE League, F.League, Japan Inclusive Football Federation (JIFF), and 47 FA. Subsequently, the matter was addressed in the second part of the Respect Fair Play Days symposium.

To deepen understanding within the football family, workshops were conducted for JFA staff, league and association officials, and executives from the football family across the nine regions and 47 prefectures. Moving forward, April will be designated as a focus month each year to promote its implementation.

This declaration aims to sustainably and reliably deliver diverse opportunities and choices, enabling everyone to challenge themselves to play, watch, and engage with football.

Given that women constitute the largest minority within



the population, we also strive to ensure that women, who represent half the population, gain more natural and straightforward access.

We aim to transform Japan's sporting culture, starting by raising awareness of the reality that access is restricted in various ways, while securing the commitment of leaders across organisations, and making this the norm within the football family.



JFA official Web-site  
The Declaration Access For All  
[https://www.jfa.jp/about\\_jfa/accessforall/](https://www.jfa.jp/about_jfa/accessforall/)

### The Declaration, Access for All



**From grassroots to elite, we will sustainably and reliably deliver diverse opportunities and options, ensuring that everyone has access to football through “playing”, “watching”, and “engaging” with the game.**

To achieve the above,

**1** Together with each league, the 47 Prefectural Football Associations across nine regions and various affiliated organisations, JFA will make it the norm for everyone who loves football to have access to the game in their daily lives across Japan, and for all members of the football family to enjoy and challenge themselves through football.

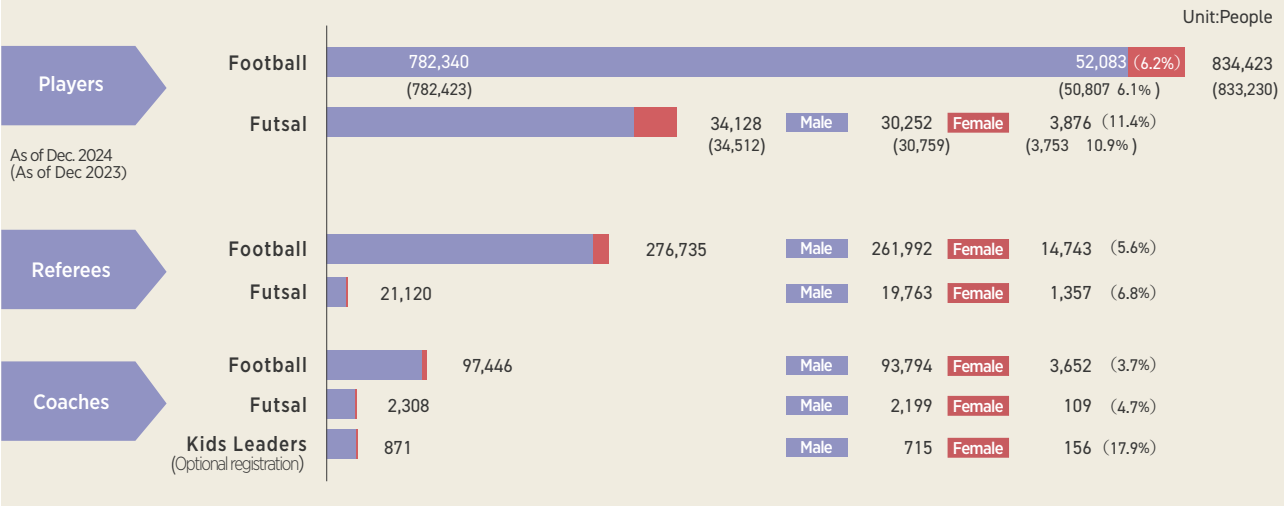
**2** Through football, we will promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and drive change in Japan's sporting culture.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, with the initials of the three terms forming “DEI”.

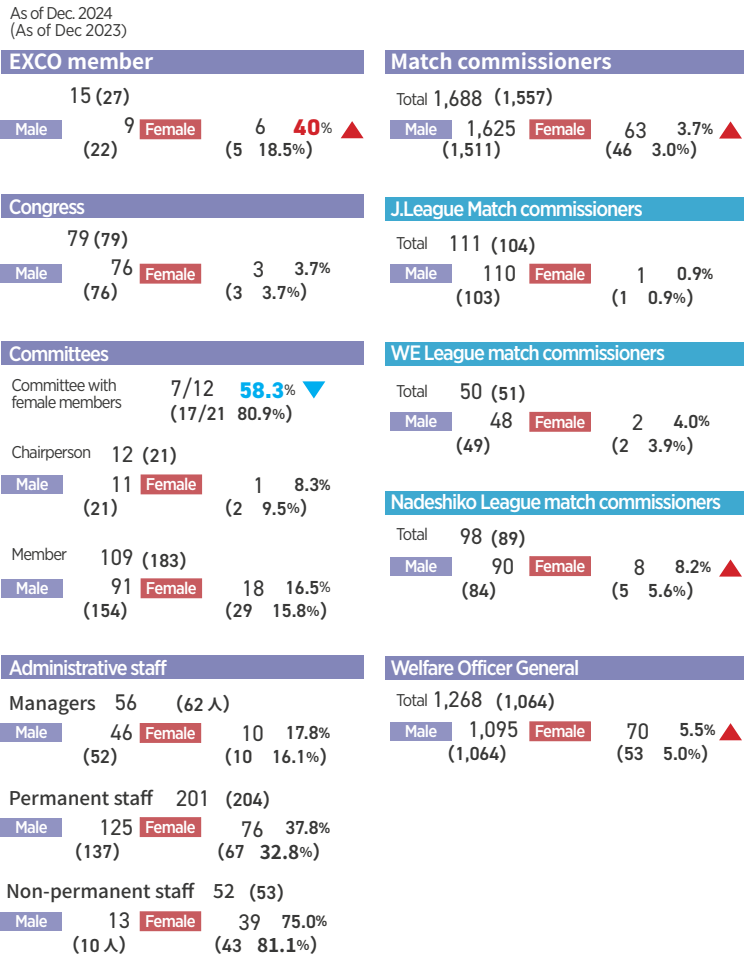


JFANumber of women in the football family

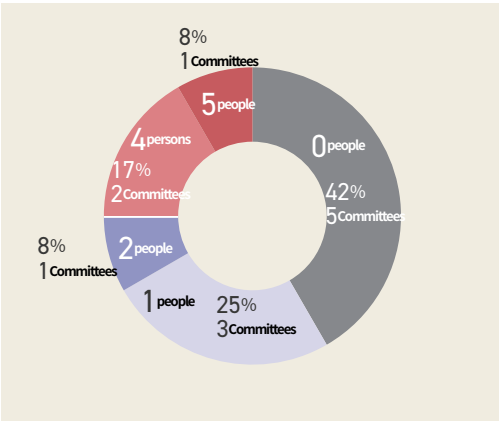
JFA Registration



JFANumber of women among JFA executive members and staffs



Number of women in 12 committees



WEなでしこリーグFemale Staff in WE League & Nadeshiko League

The number and proportion of women among officers and staff in the WE League and Nadeshiko League are as follows. In the WE League, a board re-election took place in September 2024, significantly reducing the number of directors from 15 to 9. Consequently, the proportion of female directors decreased from 53% to 33%.

|    | WE League |       |       | Nadeshiko League |       |       | JAPAN FUTSAL Top League |       |       |
|----|-----------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| 役員 | TOTAL     | Women | Ratio | TOTAL            | Women | Ratio | TOTAL                   | Women | Ratio |
| 理事 | 9         | 3     | 33 %  | 14               | 10    | 71 %  | 15                      | 5     | 33 %  |
| 監事 | 2         | 1     | 50 %  | 2                | 1     | 50 %  | 2                       | 1     | 50 %  |

WEVisualisation of Women's Appointments in the WE League

The WE League is Japan's first sports organisation to mandate the appointment of women in its club membership criteria. Although the Sports Agency formulated a Sports Organisation Governance Code in 2019, it lacks penalty provisions and its implementation remains unclear. By clarifying the three points outlined below, the WE League will make organisational diversity visible, thereby benefiting both the WE League and the future of sports organisations.

Entry Criteria (Excerpt)

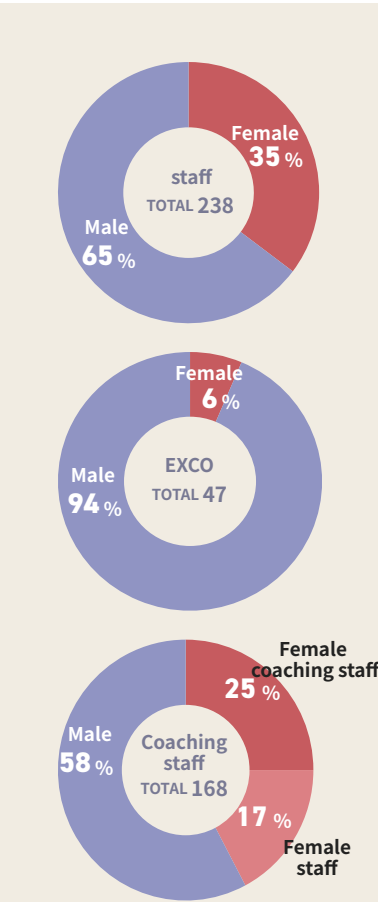
- At least 50% of the officers and staff comprising the legal entity operating the club shall be women (to be achieved within three years of membership)
- At least one woman shall be involved in the club's decision-making (preferably at director level or above)
- The coaching staff (manager or coach) shall include at least one female coach

Female Staff in WE League & clubs (As of Dec. 2024)

|   | EXECUTIVE |        |       | EXCO  |        |       | TEAM STAFF |        |                  |       |
|---|-----------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------------|--------|------------------|-------|
|   | TOTAL     | Female | Ratio | TOTAL | Female | Ratio | TOTAL      | Female | (Coaching staff) | Ratio |
| WE League                                     | 18        | 13     | 72 %  | 9     | 3      | 33 %  |            |        |                  |       |
| MYNAVI SENDAI                                 | 15        | 8      | 53 %  | 2     | 0      | 0 %   | 18         | 8      | (4)              | 44 %  |
| MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES URAWA REDS LADIES | 8         | 4      | 50 %  | 3     | 0      | 0 %   | 16         | 8      | (6)              | 50 %  |
| OMIYA ARDIJA VENTUS                           | 34        | 10     | 29 %  | 3     | 0      | 0 %   | 9          | 4      | (3)              | 44 %  |
| CHIFURE AS ELFEN SAITAMA                      | 14        | 6      | 43 %  | 5     | 0      | 0 %   | 15         | 7      | (5)              | 47 %  |
| JEF UNITED ICHIHARA CHIBA LADIES              | 36        | 10     | 28 %  | 8     | 2      | 25 %  | 18         | 10     | (6)              | 56 %  |
| NIPPON TV TOKYO VERDY BELEZA                  | 15        | 8      | 53 %  | 2     | 0      | 0 %   | 13         | 2      | (1)              | 15 %  |
| NOJIMA STELLA KANAGAWA SAGAMIHARA             | 10        | 4      | 40 %  | 3     | 1      | 33 %  | 14         | 8      | (7)              | 57 %  |
| AC NAGANO PARCEIRO LADIES                     | 23        | 7      | 30 %  | 8     | 1      | 13 %  | 10         | 3      | (2)              | 30 %  |
| ALBIREX NIIGATA LADIES                        | 11        | 5      | 45 %  | 5     | 1      | 20 %  | 11         | 6      | (2)              | 55 %  |
| CEREZO OSAKA YANMAR LADIES                    | 13        | 8      | 62 %  | 6     | 0      | 0 %   | 13         | 7      | (2)              | 54 %  |
| INAC KOBE LEONESSA                            | 11        | 5      | 56 %  | 4     | 0      | 0 %   | 18         | 3      | (2)              | 17 %  |
| SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA REGINA                    | 50        | 9      | 18 %  | 5     | 0      | 0 %   | 13         | 5      | (2)              | 38 %  |
| TOTAL   | 238       | 84     | 35 %  | 54    | 5      | 9 %   | 168        | 71     | (42)             | 42 %  |

※ Female staff members include trainers other than head coaches, including team managers. ※ Female coaches refer to female instructors holding a JFA coaching licence. ※ Where categories are concurrently managed, the primary category or the higher category shall be counted. ※ The number of officers and staff excludes part-time directors, auditors, and on-site staff. ※ Players targeted for development and academy directors are included in the number of officers and staff.

Ratio (As of Dec. 2024)





## WE STATEMENT 2024

Each club in the WE League has published a WE STATEMENT outlining the club's guiding principles for realising its philosophy, updating it annually as necessary.



WE League official Web-site  
WE STATEMENT  
<https://weleague.jp/weaction/2/#club>



### MYNAVI SENDAI

MYNAVI SENDAI Ladies aims to enhance its value within the community and become an even more beloved club. Working in collaboration with other professional sports teams based in Sendai, we strive to become an organisation that further energises Sendai, Miyagi, and the Tohoku region.



### MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES URAWA REDS LADIES

We shall build a healthy and sustainable club that everyone can take pride in and feel connected to, aiming for world-class football to realise our vision.



### OMIYA ARDIJA VENTUS

OMIYA ARDIJA VENTUS will create a new "wind" alongside the community to realise our vision. This "new wind" signifies a constant effort to generate fresh momentum. Not only in our inaugural season, but continually for the community and for the children, we shall persist in challenging ourselves with innovative ideas.



### CHIFURE AS ELFEN SAITAMA

CHIFURE AS ELFEN SAITAMA actively engages in activities that connect diverse possibilities to the future - for the children's future, for the future of the global environment, and for the future of women's football - in pursuit of its philosophy.



### JEF UNITED ICHIHARA CHIBA LADIES

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA CHIBA LADIES shall practise the seven JEF Spirits - Sincerity, Challenge, Connection, Club and Community, Diversity, Development, and Inspiration - to realise our philosophy.



### NIPPON TV TOKYO VERDY BELEZA

We at NIPPON TV TOKYO VERDY BELEZA will contribute to the revitalisation and development of our local community, striving to become a club cherished throughout our home town and surrounding area, in pursuit of the WE League's vision.



### NOJIMA STELLA KANAGAWA SAGAMIHARA

NOJIMA STELLA KANAGAWA SAGAMIHARA aims to become the star of its local community (hence the team name) to realise the WE League's vision. From diverse Kanagawa, we strive to create a society where every individual can shine, regardless of gender or age, and aspire to be Japan's most radiant club.



### AC NAGANO PARCEIRO LADIES

AC NAGANO PARCEIRO LADIES will act to realise the WE League's philosophy, understanding diversity and working towards a future for NAGANO where everyone can shine. To advance this philosophy, players will take the lead in community outreach activities. Team staff recruitment will prioritise women, with a strong focus on personnel development.



### ALBIREX NIIGATA LADIES

We, Albirex Niigata Ladies, pledge to become individuals capable of excelling both on and off the pitch to realise our vision, thereby contributing to the creation of a vibrant Niigata. We promise to invigorate Niigata as a community - its people, its town, its resources, its culture, traditions and performing arts, its cuisine, its tourism, its climate - and to become a shining presence.



### CEREZO OSAKA YANMAR LADIES

We, CEREZO OSAKA YANMAR LADIES, develop businesses centred on football, contributing to the promotion of a sports culture brimming with dreams, hope and inspiration, and to the development of the local community.



### INAC KOBE LEONESSA

INAC KOBE LEONESSA, under the slogan 'For The Future', aims to become an organisation that inspires dreams and hope in young girls through football for the development of Japanese women's football, striving to realise the WE League Credo.



### SANFRECCCE HIROSHIMA REGINA

We, Sanfrecce Hiroshima Regina, as a club possessing both men's and women's teams to realise our philosophy, will increase the number of individuals who, regardless of gender, RESPECT one another and contribute to the development of football alongside the local community through the sport.

## WE MEETING

Since before the 2021 season commenced, the WE League has held WE MEETINGS with each club, attended by all league officials and players. The purpose is to share the league's philosophy, deepen mutual understanding to build trust, and foster a sense of unity as a league. For the 2023/24 season, two clubs were able to hold in-person meetings. The content included a presentation on WE League football and global trends summarising the year's technical data, followed by Chair TAKATA (at the time) conveying the WE League's philosophy and recent initiatives. This was followed by a discussion about the Credo created by the players during the WE League's inaugural season.



WE League official Web-site  
2024 WE MEETING REPORT  
<https://weleague.jp/news/1386/>



© WE LEAGUE



© WE LEAGUE

## JFA Female Coaches

### Overview

As of December 2024, female coaches account for 3.8% of the total (see table on next page). The number of female coaches is expected to increase in line with the rise in female players, but it remains very low regardless, necessitating proactive improvement. FIFA, UEFA, and the AFC are all implementing various proactive measures on this important topic. Coach development should inherently be conducted without distinction between genders, and there has been debate about singling out women for special focus. However, considering that the current state is the result of years of natural progression, a period of special measures is necessary to lay the foundations for change. One reason for the scarcity of female coaches is the lack of role models. Many female players, throughout their playing careers from childhood, have had limited experience being coached by women. Consequently, they often lack the vision of themselves becoming coaches themselves. Furthermore, their small numbers make them stand out, leading to a tendency to generalise about them despite their individual differences. The presence of female coaches is also considered vital for advancing the popularity of women's football. Particularly at younger ages, while there are all-girls teams, there are also many opportunities to play in mixed groups. Often, this involves a few girls striving within a large group of boys.

At such times, having female coaching staff present is immensely reassuring for the children and lowers the barrier to participation. It also provides peace of mind for parents and guardians. This is particularly true for activities involving

away trips or overnight stays. We are committed to creating environments where female coaches are present, especially at the grassroots level and for U-12 age groups, to advance the sport's development. We are working to increase the number of female coaches and actively promote their placement within these settings.

### Female only courses as the affirmative action

To make it easier for female coaches to access and to participate in coaching development courses, we have established licence courses specifically for women. (See table on next page) Initially, there were concerns about conducting licence courses exclusively for women, including worries about a potential drop in standards, the actual demand, and a lack of experience. However, upon encountering participants who attend with passion, absorb the material, and grow, these preconceptions have been completely dispelled. Whilst there are certainly benefits to attending alongside men, and this remains an option, we are committed to increasing opportunities and enhancing accessibility. Prefectural football associations (FAs) across Japan are also undertaking various initiatives, such as establishing women-only courses, encouraging participation, and facilitating implementation at grassroots level.



► 2024 Female only courses

|              |              |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| B<br>licence | JFA          | D<br>licence | MIYAGI FA    |
|              | JUWFA        |              | IBAEAKI FA   |
| C<br>licence | WECLUB       |              | GUNMA FA     |
|              | Osaka FA     |              | KANAGAWA FA  |
|              | Chiba FA     |              | TOYAMA FA    |
|              | Okayama FA   |              | SHIZUOKA FA  |
|              | Miyazaki FA  |              | MIE FA       |
|              | Kagoshima FA |              | GIFU FA      |
|              |              |              | FUKUOKA FA   |
|              |              |              | MIYAZSAKI FA |

► Affirmative actions

Female only courses

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| APro licence | Since 2020 |
| A licence    | Since 2021 |
| B licence    | Since 2018 |
| C licence    | Since 2017 |

※ Organised by JFA、47FA、WEclubs、JUWFA

|           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| D licence | Since 2017 |
|-----------|------------|

※ Nadeshiko League、JFA、47FA、JUWFA

► Number of Registered licenced coaches

| Football                               | TOTAL         | Female              | Ratio       |
|--|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| S licence                              | 566           | 22(18)              | 3.9%        |
| A licence General                      | 2,222         | 74(71)              | 3.3%        |
| S licence U-15                         | 210           | 3(3)                | 1.4%        |
| S licence U-12                         | 399           | 3(4)                | 0.8%        |
| B licence                              | 8,302         | 315(274)            | 3.8%        |
| C licence                              | 29,672        | 1,450(1,490)        | 4.9%        |
| D licence                              | 55,204        | 1,629(1,332)        | 3.0%        |
| Kids Leader<br>(Optional registration) | 871           | 156(154)            | 17.9%       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>97,446</b> | <b>3,652(3,346)</b> | <b>3.7%</b> |

TOTAL as of Dec 2023 93,078 3,346 3.6%

| Football (GK) | TOTAL       | Female        | Ratio       |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| GK level 3    | 271         | 5(5)          | 1.8%        |
| GK level 2    | 384         | 6(6)          | 1.6%        |
| GK level 1    | 2752        | 82(75)        | 3.0%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>3407</b> | <b>93(86)</b> | <b>2.7%</b> |

TOTAL as of Dec 2023 3,134 86 3.7%

| Futsal           | TOTAL        | Female          | Ratio       |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Futsal A licence | 61           | 2(2)            | 3.3%        |
| Futsal B licence | 235          | 8(5)            | 3.4%        |
| Futsal C licence | 2,012        | 99(96)          | 4.9%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>2,308</b> | <b>109(103)</b> | <b>4.7%</b> |

TOTAL as of Dec 2023 2,221 103 4.6%

|                                    |               |              |             |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Football + Futsal<br/>TOTAL</b> | <b>99,754</b> | <b>3,761</b> | <b>3.8%</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|

TOTAL as of Dec 2023 95,299 3,449 3.6%

● Associate-Pro Licence

In collaboration with the JFA Technical Committee, as part of the Women's Football Promotion Project, the Associate-Pro (A-Pro) Licence was introduced on a temporary basis from 2020 as a new AFC-Pro standard licence for female coaches. Holders are eligible to manage teams in the WE League. As of December 2024, 11 out of the 13 A-Pro licence holders have completed the S-grade conversion course and obtained their S-grade licence. This brings the total number of S-grade holders to 22.



JFA official Web-site  
[https://www.jfa.jp/women/associate\\_pro/](https://www.jfa.jp/women/associate_pro/)

● JFA/AFC Pro Diploma Course for Elite Female Coaches

As previously mentioned, the development of female coaches is recognised as a crucial topic worldwide and is being actively pursued. Alongside increasing the overall numbers, the training of higher-level coaches is also prioritised, with various initiatives implemented such as setting aside places for women on courses and establishing scholarships for higher-level licence programmes. Across Asia, not just Japan, it is not straightforward for female coaches to access professional licence courses. As a positive action to address this ahead of the AFC Women's Champions League launch, the JFA, in collaboration with the AFC, has organised this Women's Pro Diploma Course. Comprising 20 coaches from 14 countries, including seven participants from Japan, the course commenced in October. While this approach is being considered for overall coaching development, to make participation more accessible, the intensive training sessions have been shortened. Learning between sessions is facilitated through mentoring. This method prioritises a more reality-based approach, meaning coaching practice is grounded in the participants' own regular coaching environments. Mentors then visit these settings to support and build upon the coaching practice.



► Purpose

For the sustainable development of Women's Football in Japan

1. Increase the participation of Women/o

- To prevent a decline in participation due to reduced playing opportunities, the women's football committee will implement its promotion initiatives as an "ALL JFA" initiative.
- Create an environment where women can enjoy football continuously, thereby increasing the number of women who enjoy and support the sport over the long term.



2. Developing leaders to lead the next generation

- Not only enables individuals to become coaches of WE League but also cultivates role models who nurture and guide the next generation of leaders.
- Development of the global personnels

New Initiatives

As a breakthrough for developing female leaders, a licence equivalent to the S-licence, the 'Associate-Pro (A-Pro) Licence', will be created on a 'temporary basis'.

Not only for women's football, but for the continued development of Japanese football as a whole

Tutor 's comment

ONO Takeshi, AFC Vice Technical Director

Not only in Japan, but across Asia, there are female coaches possessing outstanding talent yet unable to participate in Pro-Diploma Courses. To provide such coaches with opportunities, the AFC and JFA have been in discussions for the past two years, culminating in this course being launched as a pilot project. The first module commenced with 20 participants from 14 countries. I believe it got off to a truly splendid start, thanks to the determined efforts of the participants who approached it with resolve. Conducted entirely in English, this course undoubtedly presented many challenges. Yet, the sparkle in their eyes as they tackled each task – communicating earnestly, demonstrating passion, and cooperating with their peers – gave a sense of a new future for Japan and for Asia. Furthermore, alongside JFA experts including technical director, we welcomed distinguished guests: Professor SAKAMOTO Akihiro, a leading authority in ASE education; Dr DOHI Michiko, active in FIFA/AFC medical departments; former Portugal striker Nuno Gomes (FIFA), who shared his remarkable experiences; former USA Women's World Cup-winning captain April Heinrichs (FIFA); Mr Dany Ryser, former U17 Swiss national team coach who reached the world's pinnacle; Mr IKEDA Futoshi former Nadeshiko Japan coach; and Mr Wim Koevers, AFC coaching development expert. These distinguished guests provided insights from diverse perspectives throughout the course. On behalf of the AFC, I would like to express my gratitude to the passionate participants from various countries, who

will undoubtedly continue to grow through strong bonds, and to the JFA staff who supported this course with the utmost hospitality.

Participant's comment

KAWASHIMA Tamai, Sfida Setagaya FC

The opening day arrived amid palpable tension, yet we were inspired by the resolute determination and focused gaze of the female coaches gathered from 14 nations, enabling us to spend deeply fulfilling days. During the special sessions, we heard the authentic voices and passion for coaching and player development from guests who had excelled at FIFA and with national teams; looking back, it proved invaluable time that nourished our aspirations and provided sustenance. During the coaching practice, we experienced the practicalities and challenges of staff work firsthand. I was simply moved by the excellent environment where participants and tutors provided advice on whether our training structure – specifically, the planning and composition based on working backwards from the game – aligned with the objectives and content. At the midpoint, we deepened teamwork in Tsukuba University's Wild Forest, where participants forged bonds transcending language barriers. Moving towards Module 2, I intend to tackle the challenges of improving my English skills and refining the game model through self-directed learning in the interim. Once again, I extend my sincere gratitude to all the club and university players, and everyone involved, for their invaluable cooperation in the coaching practice sessions.

JFA/AFC Pro Diploma Course for Elite Female Coaches

**KUWAHARA Yoshie** JFA Youth development coach for women, the Kanto region, Representative of the Yokosuka Seagulls women's team, and Kanagawa FA C/D licence

Ms KUWAHARA Yui, who serves as the JFA youth development coach for women, the Kanto region, representative of the Yokosuka Seagulls women's team, and Kanagawa FA C/D licence undertook the FIFA Coach Educator course before giving birth in June 2024. She delivered a baby girl on 19th June and, whilst raising her child, has also been challenging herself with the AFC/JFA Pro Diploma since October. Whereas those around her might naturally assume that with childbirth approaching... or childcare responsibilities... it might be too much, she constantly seeks work and opportunities for skill development, continuing to take on various challenges. We heard about her aspirations.

Firstly, I have always enjoyed my work and wanted to remain involved in it regardless of circumstances. Furthermore, I felt strongly that career advancement opportunities should not be halted due to pregnancy, childbirth, or childcare responsibilities. Both mother and child were doing well, and I was even sending administrative communications for club work right up until the day before and the day of the birth.

Yokosuka Seagulls × Woman

Yokosuka Seagulls champions itself as a club where women can play football throughout their lives. Even during my time as a player at Yokosuka Seagulls, many coaches deeply respectful of women were involved in running the club. When former president Emi Yamamoto moved to play for CHIFUEW AS ELFVN SAITAMA around the time the WE League was launched, I took over as president. As the WE League itself advocates, having women on the board is crucial. Japan has few women in executive roles or politics, consistently ranking last among the G7 nations in the Global Gender Gap Index. First and foremost, I believe it is vital for women



to assume positions of authority, even within small organisations or limited groups. Personally, I don't feel it must be me specifically, but I do enjoy being in a position to spearhead initiatives or make decisions. So, when such opportunities arise, I step forward. I firmly believe women should take on these roles in society going forward. I hope others will think, 'If she can do it, perhaps I can too?' and take the challenge. Moreover, the presence of two individuals who played alongside me for six years at the Yokosuka Seagulls during junior high and high school, and who remain involved in women's football today, is significant. One is Ms KUNO Fubuki, who plays at the highest level as the guardian of the goal for Nojima Stella Kanagawa Sagami-hara. She is the last active player from my year group that I played with, and seeing her excel in the WE League is truly inspiring. The other is OTAKI Ami, who now serves as a WE League director. Even during her playing days, she constantly ventured out into the world, broadening her horizons. Her vitality is always inspiring – she felt a sense of urgency and necessity regarding women and careers, leading her to establish Nadeshiko Care.

Women's Football × Pregnancy, Childbirth and Childcare

I believe the physical infrastructure for women involved in women's football should evolve swiftly to support them through life stages such as marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childcare, while the cultural aspects should change gradually. I also hope for greater understanding from those around them, both men and women. To achieve this, I think it's vital first to listen to those directly affected, and for women themselves to assert their needs firmly. By doing so, you may find support or people emerge to connect the dots. This is a transitional period, and



I imagine there will be struggles and frustrations until the environment is properly established. I too experienced many difficulties working while pregnant, giving birth, and raising a child, and felt frustrated by the candid remarks that slipped out. During such times, the person who supported me was Ms SAITO Orie, General Manager of Nippon Yokohama FC Seagulls, who also participated in the Women's Leadership Programme. In fact, a staff member at Yokosuka Seagulls gave birth in February, and during her pregnancy, she consulted Ms Saito about maternity and childcare leave. Ms SAITO felt this was something women's football as a whole needed to address, and she spoke to various people, particularly regarding contracts. I understand FIFA regulations are also being reviewed. First and foremost, I hope the physical infrastructure is established quickly. Another crucial factor is the family. For women's football to coexist with pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare, family understanding is essential. My husband and family already understood my professional commitments, so continuing my work wasn't met with any discomfort. They fully support me with childcare in every way possible. However, if comprehensive support like mine becomes a prerequisite, it will be difficult for more women to successfully combine women's football with pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare. At our club, training for youth teams typically runs from evening into night, with weekend activities being routine. Having accessible childcare options during these evening hours and on weekends would enable coaches to continue working. I hope society, not just the football world, will gradually address these needs.

Women × Career

This Pro Diploma course has been tremendously stimulating, learning alongside fellow Japanese participants and individuals from across Asia who are active at the forefront

of their fields. Beyond the course content itself, spending time tackling assignments together and gaining new companions has broadened my world. I do struggle with English, though; I believe I could enjoy it even more if I could understand and express myself better. Juggling childcare makes it difficult to find the time I'd like, but I'll strive to improve before the next module. Throughout my journey, I have consistently pursued learning, driven by a desire to provide high-quality coaching. I have obtained my C, B, and A licence U15 qualifications, achieved Women's A licence General status, and am currently undertaking the Pro Diploma. Each step has coincided with timely learning opportunities. Both mixed-gender courses and women-only courses have their merits. Personally, I find the learning environment with female coaches immensely stimulating. Speaking with other women, I often sense that many, even when opportunities exist, create their own barriers to taking that first step forward. For better or worse, I tend to forge ahead. Doing so has led to career advancement and allowed me to meet mentors who have provided me with numerous opportunities and learning experiences. I sincerely hope more female coaches and athletes will also challenge themselves, including in skill development and career progression. While pregnancy and childbirth may become part of each individual's lifestyle, I encourage them to embrace these challenges.



Mentoring for the female head coaches

The active training and support of female coaches is being pursued across the global football community. In Japan, opportunities for female managers to take charge have emerged in the WE League and Nadeshiko League. However, there remains a lack of instances and extensive experience of women managing teams in professional or equivalent environments, making it difficult for them to fully utilise their capabilities in addressing the wide range of challenges. To specifically support the role of manager, drawing on initiatives from FIFA and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), we have now established a system enabling those who wish to do so to consult with experienced individuals.

C Licence Course for the WE League Pro Players

To foster female coaching talent and deepen understanding of football, WE League professional players are required to obtain a C licence coaching licence. Training sessions have been held at each club, with all clubs now having completed the programme. To date, 203 WE League players from 12 clubs have obtained their C licence. Attending these sessions has enabled them to view football from a different perspective. Many now aspire to become coaches in the future, and some players have even set their sights on pursuing higher coaching qualifications. Four active WE League players currently hold B-level licences, with one expected to obtain an A licence. Coach YAMAMOTO Emi of CHIFURE AS ELFEN SAITAMA has become the first coach from a WE League club's top category to have gained experience as a WE League player.



© WE LEAGUE

Skill-up seminar to support the challenges for the higher licences

To encourage challenges for higher-level licences, we have been conducting training sessions for female instructors since 2016. The training focuses particularly on practical coaching sessions, aiming to build confidence for tackling trial coaching sessions required to challenge for higher-level licences.

Skill up seminar trial for the A licence 2023-2024

- 1st seminar

2024/1/13,14

7 participants
- 2nd seminar

2024/2/3,4

8 participants

Mentoring for the female coaches

|           | Participants | Frequency |                      |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|----------------------|
| B licence | 4            | 7         | 1-2 times per person |
| C licence | 5            | 7         |                      |

2 slots each for the 47FA Female Tutors

Female tutors at C and D Licence numbered only 8 out of 550 (1.5%) prior to 2019. To actively cultivate female leaders, two dedicated female tutor positions were established for each 47FA tutor. As of December 2024, female tutors at C and D licence account for 43 out of 616 tutors (7.0%). The future target for the number of female tutors in 47FA is 100. It is also anticipated that female tutors will gain experience and progress to become tutors for higher-level licences. This is preparation to enable them to become key personnel occupying an important part of leadership development.

2024 Female Tutors

|                    | TOTAL | Female | Ratio |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| B licence tutor    | 171   | 5      | 2.9%  |
| CD licence tutor   | 616   | 43     | 7.0%  |
| CD licence advisor | 36    | 3      | 8.3%  |

For the Future

For many women, it can be difficult to envision coaching as something personally relevant, leading to challenges in attracting participants. Some even suggest there may be no demand. However, many women coaches currently active in the field began their journey after being approached, encouraged, and supported by mentors or coaches around them. We sincerely request the cooperation of all coaches in this regard. Furthermore, a significant challenge for the future is reducing the number of licence expirations and resignations. While this issue is not exclusive to women, we will examine systems and policies to encourage long-term continuation of coaching, enabling individuals to resume after temporary breaks due to childbirth or childcare.

Female Head coaches & assistant coaches

|  |    |
|--|----|
| JFA National coaching staff                        | 3  |
| WE LEAGUE 2023/24 Head Coach                       | 1  |
| Nadeshiko League 2023 Head Coach                   | 5  |
| F.LEAGUE division1Head coaches & assistant coaches | 1  |
| WOMEN'S F.LEAGUE Head coaches & assistant coaches  | 0  |
| JFA Women's Coach                                  | 13 |

47FA Female Technical Director

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| OKAYAMA FA | 1FA/47FA (2.1%) |
|------------|-----------------|

Japan University Women Football Association(JUWFA)

|            |                         |   |
|------------|-------------------------|---|
| Teams      | 84                      | HOKKAIDO 2/TOHOKU 3<br>KANTO 34/HOKUSHINETSU 5<br>TOKAI 7/KANSAI 17<br>CHUGOKU 5/SHIKOKU 2/KYUSHU 9               |
| Players    | 2,186                   | HOKKAIDO TOHOKU 114<br>KANTO 1,113/HOKUSHINETSU 99<br>TOKAI 155/KANSAI 429<br>CHUGOKU 80/SHIKOKU 49<br>KYUSHU 147 |
| Head Coach | Female 18 (22%) Male 64 |   |

As of Dec. 2024

47FA Female Youth Directors

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| HOKKAIDO FA SHIZUOKA FA | 2FA/47FA (4.3%) |
|-------------------------|-----------------|

JUWFA

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| D licence                                 | 10  |
| C licence                                 | 130 |
| KG-C licence                              | 2   |
| Physical C licence                        | 1   |
| Participants of the coaching courses 2023 | 14  |

Players from the JUWFA

|                  |               |                 |                    |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| WE League        | 112           | As of Dec. 2024 |                    |
| Nadeshiko League | Division1 112 | Division2 162   | As the 2023 season |

JFA Female coaches in global football

Some female coaches have pursued higher-level coaching licences or utilised the JFA's overseas dispatch programmes to gain international experience, including leading national teams.

HONDA Midori

2022-2024 Uzbekistan Women's A-National Head Coach  
In the 2024 Paris Olympics qualifiers, they were drawn in the same group as Nadeshiko Japan in the second round and faced them. They advanced to the semi-finals and progressed to the final round.

SUZUKI Konomi

2023-2024 U-20/U-17 North Mariana National Head Coach  
Following the departure of Tomoki Mita, who served as both coach of the Northern Mariana Islands U-17 and U-20 national teams and as Technical Committee Chairman for the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, she acted as the interim Technical Committee Chairman during the period leading up to the appointment of his successor. She also participated in the AFC U-20 Asian Cup (Men) as the tournament's first female coach.

TOYODA Nayuha

2023-2024 Laos Women's A-National Head Coach  
The 2024 Laos women's national team gained valuable experience through international matches such as the ASEAN Football Federation Women's Championship and friendly matches, which proved to be a valuable asset for both players and coaches.



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JFA Female Referees

Registered Female Referees

|                              | TOTAL   | Female | Ratio |
|------------------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| Football Referees            | 276,735 | 14,743 | 5.3%  |
| Futsal Referees              | 21,120  | 1,357  | 6.4%  |
| Football referee instructors | 2,977   | 136    | 4.6%  |
| Futsal referee instructors   | 576     | 30     | 5.2%  |
| TOTAL                        | 301,408 | 16,266 | 5.4%  |

Registered female referees as of 1st, Nov. 2023



[ Collaboration with All Japan University Women's Football Association(JUWFA) ]

As a collaborative initiative with JUWFA, we held a 'Referee Skills Development Workshop'. The Association invited applications from affiliated university football clubs, and eight referees holding qualifications (Level 4 to Level 2) who expressed interest in this workshop, along with two referee instructors dispatched by the JFA, facilitated each programme. The workshop successfully achieved its objectives: 'to demonstrate that involvement in football extends beyond being a player or coach, offering alternative pathways; and to expand the community of individuals who can enjoy football throughout their lives.' We will continue to collaborate with the Federation in developing personnel involved in football.

Referees from the JUWFA

|        |   |        |     |        |       |
|--------|---|--------|-----|--------|-------|
| Class2 | 6 | Class3 | 142 | Class4 | 1,070 |
|--------|---|--------|-----|--------|-------|

[ Class 2 referees from JUWFA ]

By appointing Class 2 female referees recommended from each region to national tournaments, we provide them with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. They are developed through coaching by Class 1 referee instructors dispatched by the JFA. Furthermore, we enhance their capabilities by offering referees who perform well additional opportunities to officiate. During the 2024 season, nine referees served as main referees for the Nadeshiko League (Division 2) throughout the year.

Female referees in international competition

The referees officiating the WE League are the top female referees in the country. Similarly, the referees officiating as referees in the Nadeshiko League are also the top female referees in the country. Additionally, in the J.League, one referee (YAMASHITA Yoshimi) and two assistant referees (BOZONO Makoto, TESHIROGI Naomi) are assigned. Four female international football referees, four female international football assistant referees, and three female international futsal referees are registered.

[AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024]

YAMASHITA Yoshimi, BOZONO Makoto and TESHIROGI Naomi became the first trio officiating men's match at the Asian Cup.

Me's : Group Stage U-23 EGYvs U-23 DOM

Women's : Group Stage ZAM vs GER

[The Olympic Games Paris 2024]

YAMASHITA Yoshimi, BOZONO Makoto and TESHIROGI Naomi became the first trio officiating men's Olympic Games.

Group Stage AUS vs IND



[FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Dominican Republic 2024]

KOIZUMI Asaka officiated 4 matches

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Groupe Stage | ESP vs USA |
|              | DOM vs NZL |
| QF           | NGA vs USA |
| SF           | ESP vs ENG |

[AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2024]

KOIZUMI Asaka officiated the ¾ placing match  
#/4 placing AUS vs KOR



[AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024]

KOIZUMI Asaka officiated the ¾ placing match  
#/4 placing KOR vs CHN



©AFC

JFA National Teams of disability footballs

In various categories of football for persons with disabilities, the Japan women's national team is excelling in international tournaments and matches. Furthermore, various promotional activities are being conducted domestically.

Performance in International Competitions

|  |  |                                |                 |
|--|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Japan Women's CP Football National Team    | 2024 IFCPF Women's World Cup                                       | November 13-19<br>Salou, Spain | 4th             |
| Japan Women's Blind Football National Team | Saitama City Normalization Cup 2024 (International Friendly Match) | February 17<br>Saitama, Japan  | Japan 1-0 India |
| Japan Women's Deaf Futsal National Team    | 20th Winter Deaflympics  | March 2-12<br>Erzurum, Turkey  | 5th             |

Grassroots Activities

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Japan Amputee Football Association (JAFA)                                  | AMPUTEE FOOTBALL GIRL' S -Challenge Camp- 2024   | August 24 - J-SOCIETY FOOTBALL PARK Tama (Tokyo, Japan)<br>September 28 - Shintomi Football Center (Miyazaki, Japan)<br>November 17 - Okudo Sports Center (Tokyo, Japan)<br>December 14 - KOBE UNIVERSITY SPORTS FIELD Supported by MIZUNO (Hyogo, Japan) |
| Japan Social Football Association (JSFA)                                   | Women's Development Program (JSFA-Accredited Activity): Social Football Women's Team DREAM | August 13 - Exchange Meeting (Aichi, Japan)<br>September 16 - Social Football Clinic for Women Players (Osaka, Japan)   |
| Japan Football Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (JFFID) | Women's National Training Center for Football Players with Intellectual Disability         | November 9-10 (Kanagawa, Japan)   |
| Japan Blind Football Association (JBFA)                                    | Blind Football Women's Training Session  | September 16 - Toyosu (Tokyo, Japan)<br>October 20 - Toyosu (Tokyo, Japan)<br>November 24 - MARUI Blind Football Park (Tokyo, Japan)  |



©JDFA



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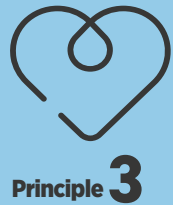
©JCPFA

WE Various roles taken by women in football

The WE League not only promotes the appointment of women as referees, staff, and decision-makers, but also encourages the placement of women in all areas related to matches. Women are now active in positions where they have previously been

underrepresented, such as commentators, analysts, broadcast directors, and camera operators.





## Health, safety and elimination of violence

### JFA Welfare Officer system

The Welfare Officer system concerns football as a whole, but we are particularly examining how leagues and associations involved in women's football can proactively address respect and safeguarding. We are fostering an environment imbued with the spirit of respect and fair play, practising the protection of the "welfare" environment by sharing observations even in the face of undesirable behaviour or situations. The JFA Women's Coaching Officer attended the Welfare Officer Training Course in 2021, undertaking new training and renewal in 2023. The Nadeshiko League has implemented the appointment of a Club Welfare Officer for all teams from the 2023 season.

The Nadeshiko League has mandated the appointment of a Club Welfare Officer for all teams from the 2023 season. The All Japan Women's University Football Association trialed student Match Welfare Officers at the All Japan University Women's Football Tournament.



JFA official Web-site  
Respect and fair play  
<https://www.jfa.jp/respect/>

### JFA .WE Respect and fair play

At the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023, Nadeshiko Japan garnered attention for their respectful conduct and were awarded the Fair Play Award. As symbolised by the national team, respect and fair play are core values of Japanese football that command global respect, and we are determined to uphold them. During the JFA Respect and Fair Play Days in September 2024, each league implemented a Respect Declaration, displayed Respect banners, made in-stadium announcements, and communicated activities via team official

websites and social media.

Furthermore, since 2022, at tournaments for the women's youth development age groups (JFA U-18 Women's Football Finals, JFA All Japan U-18/U-15 Women's Football Championship), to share Respect and Fair Play, Respect Ceremonies have been held, including captain meetings, the creation of Respect Declaration panels, and speeches by the captains.

#### ▶ Respect Ceremony of WE League

##### Declaration by Captains

6 Games in the 2024-25 S O M P O WE League 3rd Leg  
Respect Declarations by the captains

##### Respect Flags

Respect Flags at the stadiums every match

##### Announcement in the stadium

All home games in September



© WE LEAGUE



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### JFA FIFA Female Health Project

In various fields of research and development, data on women is lacking, and this is equally true for football performance. For a long time, women's training has been conducted as a scaled-down version of men's training. As the women's football division of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), we have established a project and are now communicating our findings to clarify the physical and mental characteristics of female athletes and the characteristics of the game, thereby advancing the preparation, training, and health protection of female athletes as women. We will continue to advance this research. In Japan too, we will disseminate this information, making it accessible and usable for all.



FIFA official Web-site  
<https://www.fifa.com/womens-football/fifa-female-health-project-snapshot>



JFA official Web-site  
[https://www.jfa.jp/women/FIFA\\_Female\\_Health\\_Project/](https://www.jfa.jp/women/FIFA_Female_Health_Project/)

### JFA Pink Ribbon Campaign

The JFA, alongside the WE League and Nadeshiko League, endorses the Pink Ribbon Campaign, an initiative promoting breast cancer awareness. We participate in this campaign to convey the importance of early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer, and are committed to raising awareness. During October's Pink Ribbon Month, we released statements of support from players MINAMI Moeka, KUMAGAI Saki, and KITAGAWA Hikaru, representing Nadeshiko Japan.



私たちは、ピンクリボン運動に  
賛同しています



JFA official Web-site  
[https://www.jfa.jp/social\\_action\\_programme/pinkribbon2024/](https://www.jfa.jp/social_action_programme/pinkribbon2024/)

### JFA Support for female referees during pregnancy and after childbirth

#### ● Return to refereeing after childbirth and childcare

Among the 52 Class 1 referees excluding those on leave, five returned to work after giving birth since attaining Class 1 status. Some referees also aim to return after childbirth, broadening the options available to referees.

At training sessions requiring overnight stays, there are instances where referees bring their children along, and cases where children accompany them to match venues. To foster a more conducive environment for their activities, a key challenge moving forward is to implement more comprehensive support measures in collaboration with relevant organisations and leagues.

#### ● Support for Returning to Duty

Referees must meet several conditions to be assigned to their designated category. One of these is passing the fitness test. Referees returning after childbirth are subject to the same requirements. To facilitate a smoother postnatal return, we provide training support. This support is delivered with the cooperation of JFA Physical Fitness project members, given the specialised nature of the guidance. Depending on the instruction content, online sessions may also be available. ※ If your status is suspended, you must first lift the suspension before receiving support.

**JFA .WE** ADVANCE **Support for active players during pregnancy and postpartum**

Under the guidance of the Japan Football Association (JFA), a comprehensive support system concerning pregnancy and postnatal care has been established by staff at the Japan Institute of Sport Sciences (JISS). This system is available for use by affiliated teams and local specialists (team doctors, trainers, nearby universities, etc.) when supporting eligible players.

- **Supporting system**

A supporting system has been established whereby staff from the player's affiliated team, the JFA, and JISS review support arrangements tailored to the challenges faced by the player. Medical checks: Arrangements are in place to enable consultations with sports doctors (specialising in internal medicine, orthopaedics, and gynaecology) and functional assessments by physiotherapists.

- Training Support

Facilities are available to provide training programmes tailored to the stage of pregnancy and delivery circumstances.

- **Nutrition Support**

Nutritional management during pregnancy and breastfeeding, along with dietary support for returning to competition, is available through established consultation services. Psychological support: A system is in place to assess athletes' mental and physical wellbeing, providing psychological support and counselling as required.

It has been established to serve as a foundation for supporting athletes' return to competition following pregnancy and childbirth.

## **.WE** LEAGUE WE ACTION MEETING "Safeguarding"

For the 2023/24 season, the third iteration of the WE ACTION MEETING, we adopted the theme 'Creating an Environment Where Female Athletes Can Compete Safely and Securely'. This theme was based on issues raised directly by athletes during 'WE DIALOG', a meeting with the Players' Association. During the two meetings, club staff shared immediate challenges concerning female athletes. Discussions proceeded systematically in groups, covering:

- \* The desired future state
- \* Ideas for approaches to solving the challenges
- \* The feasibility of implementation

As a method for solving the challenges, it was proposed to 'establish guidelines for interacting with fans and supporters, and conduct training for clubs and players.'

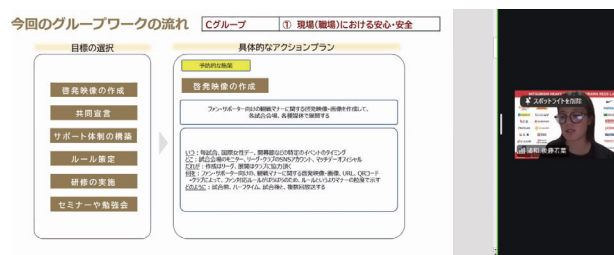
Researching examples of second

careers for former players and disseminating this information to active players', 'Establishing venues for open interaction with fans', and 'Referencing the J.League for solutions'. As one solution, the group adopted the widely proposed idea of 'producing an awareness-raising video' and created the video.



WE LEAGUE official YouTube

<https://youtu.be/-nvA0eJRSDI>



## **.WE** LEAGUE Opening of the WE League Advice Centre

▶ **Well-being Adviser**

To foster a safe and secure environment, we have established a compliance consultation service accessible to players, staff, and league personnel.



## **WE LEAGUE** Childcare Facilities

The WE League entry criteria include the requirement to 'provide a breastfeeding room and childcare facilities'. On match days, childcare facilities are set up within the stadium. To ensure that those with young children can enjoy watching the entire match, each club operates childcare facilities at their home stadium where children can be safely left.

The provision of childcare facilities is designed for use by all those involved with the WE League, including not only players returning after childbirth, but also fans, supporters, club personnel, and operational staff. During the 2023/24 season, a total of 122 players utilised the facilities for both league and cup

competitions.

The semi-finals and finals of the Kracie Cup, hosted by the WE League, saw capacity crowds, indicating that awareness of the WE League's childcare facilities is gradually increasing.

For details on each club's childcare facilities, please visit the WE League official website.



 WE LEAGUE official Web-site

<https://weleaque.jp/news/1423/>



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## JFA Players' children on the bench at the O-30 and O-40 tournaments

At the JFA 35th All-Japan O-30 Women's Football Tournament and JFA 35th O-40 Women's Football Open Tournament in March 2024, the team in question was permitted to have children present around the team bench area, subject to the condition that the

team would take responsibility for managing this safely and without risk, as shared during the match coordination meeting.





# Education and training

JFA | WE

## JFA/WE League Women Leadership Programme (JWLP)

### The 5th Edition completed

The JFA and WE League established this programme in 2020 with the aim of 'developing female executives and management personnel to lead the football and sporting world'. The fifth edition ran from June to October 2024, with 11 participants completing the course. Over the five years since its inception, the programme has produced 61 graduates to date. The three pillars of the programme, established from the outset, are: 'Understanding Women and Gender', 'Mindset Transformation', and 'Acquiring Management Literacy'. and 'Acquiring Management Literacy'. Lecturers active in diverse fields are invited to unravel the historical positions and roles women have held in society. Participants then confront the psychological barriers and internal characteristics women are often said to face as a result, learning together with peers how to overcome them. Beyond acquiring the practical skills essential for management roles, participants collectively re-examine the value of football and sport, culminating in the presentation of their final projects. This year, we also heard from Hiroko Makinery, a fourth-term graduate who has become Chair of the Nagano FA. Participants hail from diverse backgrounds including all 47 prefectural football associations (FA), WE League clubs, Nadeshiko League clubs, J.League clubs, leagues and federations. A key feature of this programme is that members study together across the boundaries of men's football, women's football, futsal, and disabled football. We anticipate that the networks forged here will be utilised in their respective roles and initiatives, helping to shape a new future for Japanese football. This year, the fifth cohort, saw the organisation of an alumni gathering. This provided an opportunity for face-to-face interaction between graduates and the fifth cohort. It served as a powerful reminder of the strength and value of this formidable network.



JFA official Web-site

[https://www.jfa.jp/social\\_action\\_programme/womens\\_empowerment/](https://www.jfa.jp/social_action_programme/womens_empowerment/)

The fifth edition was implemented as part of FIFA's Women's Football Development Programme, receiving support from FIFA and featuring special lectures. Cultivating female leaders remains a crucial global priority. Ensuring participation in decision-making bodies by individuals from diverse backgrounds, including women, is essential for the growth of Japanese football. The JFA and WE League will continue their commitment to developing female leaders.

### Overview of the programme

#### [ Purpose ]

Developing female leaders, executives and management talent to lead the football and sports.

#### [ Organiser ]

JFA, WE League

#### [ Participants ]

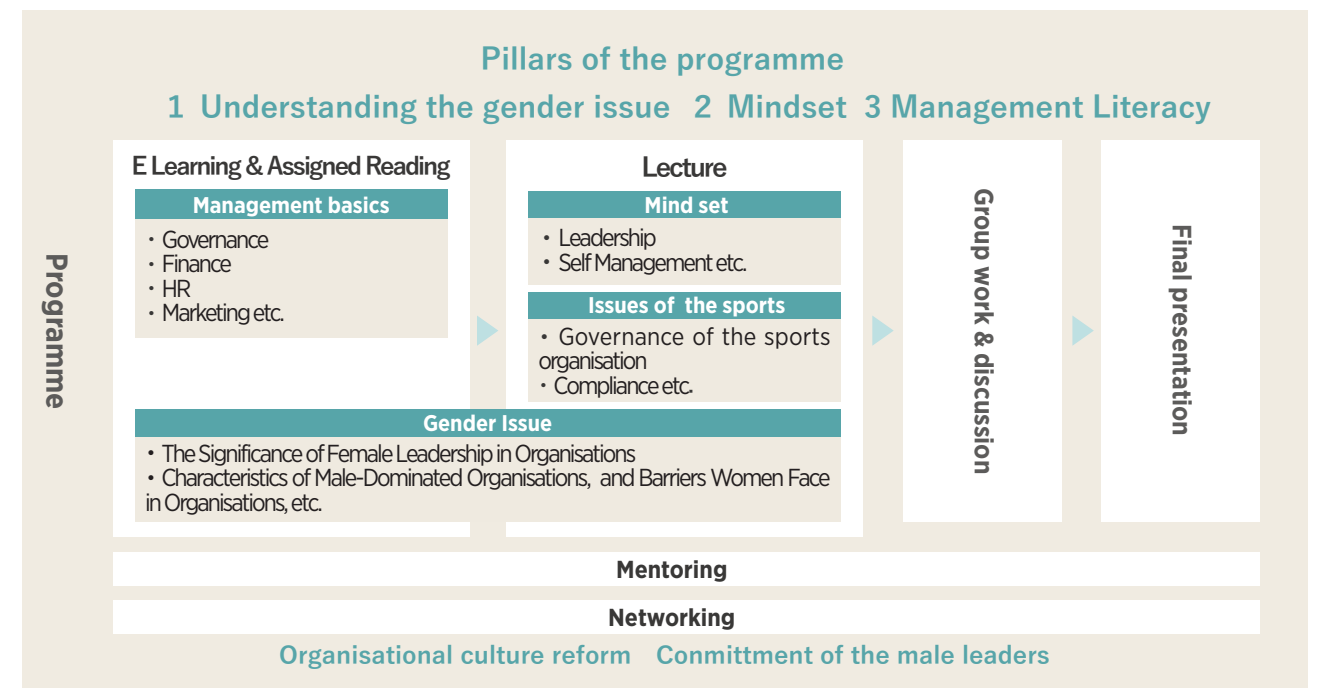
Women who meet any of the following criteria and aspire to become management personnel within the organisation in the future:

- Individuals holding the position of Vice-President or above within one of the 9 regional/47 prefectural football associations, or candidates for such positions
- Management personnel candidates for WE League clubs
- Other management personnel candidates within football or sports-related organisations

#### [ Programme ]

- Monthly weekend group training sessions comprising four modules
- Interval learning (Home work)
- Output: Presentation of individual and group assignments
- Symposium
- Post-programme follow-up

### Contents



### JWLP Participants

|                                   | 1st                                 | 2nd                              | 3rd                                       | 4th  | Unit:People<br>5th  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>47FA</b>                       | <b>3</b><br>Hokkaido, Saitama, Saga | <b>3</b><br>Toyama, Aichi, Hyogo | <b>3</b><br>Hokkaido, Kanagawa, Hiroshima | <b>5</b><br>Hyogo, Nagano, Aichi, Wakayama, Hokkaido | <b>5</b><br>Tochigi, Nagano, Fukuoka, Aichi, Sapporo city |
| <b>WE League clubs</b>            | <b>3</b>                            | <b>4</b>                         | <b>2</b>                                  | <b>4</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Nadeshiko League clubs</b>     | <b>2</b>                            | <b>3</b>                         | <b>1</b>                                  | <b>1</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>J.League clubs</b>             | <b>0</b>                            | <b>0</b>                         | <b>2</b>                                  | <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Japan Women's Futsal clubs</b> | <b>0</b>                            | <b>0</b>                         | <b>1</b>                                  | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>  |
| <b>Leagues &amp; Federations</b>  | <b>3</b>                            | <b>2</b>                         | <b>2</b>                                  | <b>3</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>JFA</b>                        | <b>1</b>                            | <b>0</b>                         | <b>1</b>                                  | <b>0</b>   | <b>0</b>  |





## Special Interview

Only female president of the prefectural FA

### Ms.Mckinnirey Hiroko

President, Nagano FA

JFA/WE League Women Leadership Programme 4th edition



I am Hiroko Mckinnirey, who has been appointed President of the Nagano Prefecture Football Association. Although I do not come from a football background, I have been given this opportunity and have taken up the role of President from this year. My background involves founding a private cram school immediately after graduating university. Several years later, I studied in the UK whilst managing the business remotely. Upon returning to Japan, I established an English conversation class within the school, taught by foreign instructors. This led to launching various new ventures supporting globalisation. Four years ago, I entrusted the role of President to a woman who had supported me and driven business expansion together. I now serve as an advisor in my capacity as founder.

#### Started Vice President role as a minority

My connection with the Football Association began abruptly in 2022 with a phone call from a fellow business executive. He asked if I would consider serving as Vice president of the Prefectural Football Association. Having only occasionally attended matches and possessing no football experience, I was initially perplexed. However, the reasons given for the offer were compelling: they sought to transform the organisation from a homogeneous structure dominated by men with football backgrounds into a more diverse one; they needed someone with managerial skills and organisational building capabilities rather than football knowledge; and they aimed to promote women's football. Diversity has always been a personal focus for me, so I felt I might be able to contribute in this

capacity and accepted the role. I served as Vice president for two years, and this June, I was appointed President.

Accepting the role of President required considerable courage, but my participation in the 4th edition of the JFA Women's Leadership Programme last year as Vice-President, along with the knowledge gained and the support of the colleagues I made there, proved to be a major factor in giving me the push I needed. First, during the programme, as part of an individual project, I had considered and presented what I could do to improve the organisation I belong to. This allowed me to clearly define the association's challenges and solutions while also engaging in organisational vision-making. Furthermore, I felt strongly that becoming president might give courage to many women involved in football and bring them joy. In particular, the faces of each of my fellow participants from the fourth cohort came to mind, giving me courage.

During my time as Vice-President prior to becoming President, I felt myself very much a minority and quite isolated, being neither from a football background nor a man. I sensed I wasn't welcome, couldn't see my role, and when I received the offer call – where they spoke of wanting to build a diverse organisation and promote women's advancement – I was passive, which was also my fault. Yet I couldn't grasp what specifically they wanted me to do or what was expected of me. I couldn't speak up in EXCO meetings and felt my presence within the association was negligible.

#### Change of the mind-set through the JWLP

Around the time a year had passed in such circumstances, I was given the opportunity

to participate in the JWLP.

I recall stating in my initial self-introduction that I wished to find my own centre during this programme. Indeed, I was desperate to address my inability to accomplish anything within the association without a firm foundation. Each session provided an opportunity to reflect on current challenges and how they related to my role. Though I felt lost within the association at the time, meeting my fellow participants during the programme allowed us to understand and empathise with each other's feelings, gradually restoring the courage and confidence I had nearly lost.

What particularly changed my mindset was realising I must take the initiative rather than remain passive. Previously, my approach had been: "What do you expect of me? What should I do?" However, I received advice that speaking up at EXCO meetings wasn't the only way to fulfil my role. I began considering what I could do, taking action and implementing it myself. With each training session, my mindset shifted and my actions changed. Only once I finally began establishing my core principles did I embark on my personal project. First, I conducted one-on-one meetings with several association directors. I listened to their perspectives on the association's history, the culture that had developed from it, how they felt within it, their aspirations for the future, their passion for football, and the dreams they wished to realise through it. Through these conversations, a vision emerged of how to create an organisation where everyone feels happy to belong. I presented the challenges and strategies for achieving this as my final project in the programme. Through these one-on-one sessions, I sensed a strong, shared

desire amongst everyone to improve the organisation with passion and to embrace change.

I felt a strong sense of passion among everyone to improve the organisation and to change. Above all, what struck me during the one-on-one interviews was how grateful everyone was that someone had listened to them. I believe they all wanted to share their thoughts and opinions more. Since then, rather than waiting to be approached, I have proactively sought communication with the association's directors. Gradually, I began to feel like I was becoming part of the association's community, which was a joy.

#### The courage to accept the role of the president

Several months after the entire programme concluded, the association's former president stepped down. When selecting the next president, I believe the choice fell upon me – someone entirely unconnected, a neutral figure, so to speak – amidst the various relationships and entanglements that had developed throughout the association's history. Regardless of the circumstances behind the offer, I decided to accept it, believing that with considerable courage, I might realise the vision I had presented during the training – creating an organisation where everyone feels happy to belong – for the benefit of all members. Had I not reflected on organisational matters during my personal training assignment, I doubt I could have conceived of organisational reform or accepted the role of president.

Several months have now passed since my appointment. I am acutely aware of the difficulty in respecting and building upon the history established by my predecessors while simultaneously introducing change. In a corporate setting, pursuing profit alongside social contribution is the norm, with that profit translating into remuneration for one's work. However, a general incorporated association is fundamentally a social contribution

organisation where everyone operates on a voluntary basis. Without a strong sense of mission, satisfaction, and fulfilment, the role becomes hollow.

Therefore, my primary aim is to build an organisation that embraces diversity while maintaining a sense of unity, and to pursue business activities where everyone collaborates to achieve a shared sense of accomplishment. I come from outside the football world and have only recently joined the association; there is much I do not yet understand. Therefore, I must learn a great deal from you all and rely on your cooperation. I intend to turn this lack of prior knowledge into a strength, humbly learning from you while advancing together with fresh ideas. I wish to bring about change, yet there is also history we must steadfastly preserve. Therefore, I intend to fulfil my role while firmly carrying the collective conviction that 'we change in order to protect'.

Even during my time as Vice-Chair and now as President, some may have thought, 'A woman who knows nothing about football...' Yet today, I am able to move forward with my own principles and vision. Thankfully, those around me teach me a great deal about football. My managing director, who supports me, is a man with long-standing involvement in football and a long tenure at the association. He imparts a wealth of football knowledge, connections, and information I didn't possess. When I propose ideas or opinions from a corporate perspective, he often says, 'I'd never considered it that way before; that's excellent,' which delights me and gives me courage and confidence.

Currently, there are three female EXCO members on the Nagano Prefecture Football Association. Even among the male members, some do not come from a football background. We hope that everyone, not just those from football, will utilise their strengths in their respective fields to help develop the organisation. We would also like to see more female members. We occasionally hear that when

women are asked to become directors, they decline. However, rather than simply asking them to fill a quota, if we clearly explain the specific vision and what we expect from them to help realise it, I believe they would become interested.

#### The insights and the friends gained through the programme are invaluable assets.

Participating in the JWLP, I encountered wonderful friends. Among the 4th edition were four Vice-Presidents from 47FA. While working on the group assignments with these four, I also connected with female Vice-Presidents from across the nation, spanning the first to fourth editions. They have been a tremendous, steadfast support for me, both when I took on the role of President and now. A powerful network has formed amongst all the programme's graduates to date. My cohort included not only FA members, but also wonderfully diverse individuals from club teams, other organisations, and different sports. Though we met for the first time, coming from diverse regions, backgrounds, and ages across the nation, a profound sense of camaraderie and unity emerged – a shared determination to create a movement together. Within that dynamic, I drew immense energy. Everyone's positive passion is tremendously inspiring. Had I not met these companions, I doubt I would have found the courage to accept the role of President. The insights gained from the programme and these wonderful friends have become a great source of courage and confidence for me. They are a precious asset I intend to cherish forever.

**JFA .WE** Learning from the abroad

● **FIFA support & Online session**

In 2024, we advanced the development of female leaders and female coaches with support from FIFA's Women's Football Development Programme. In connection with this, we were able to participate in online sessions provided by FIFA.

**[JWLP FIFA special session ]**

On 18 November, as part of the Women's Leadership Programme, we hosted an online workshop featuring three female role models as a FIFA Special Session. We heard from three female FIFA experts ( Pavlou - English FA Women's Football Development Manager, Shelley Kerr - Women's Football Expert (Consultant), and Andrea Rodebaugh of the Mexico FA) about their experiences and their journeys towards leadership. Each shared how they had pursued football, persisted in it, and gradually assumed leadership roles at a time when this was far less commonplace than it is today. They also shared their perspectives on leadership gained through their positions. When asked how they overcame obstacles and difficulties, they responded: 'We believed in the value of women's football. We held a strong conviction that if we didn't act and communicate its importance, it would be lost. We persevered alongside colleagues who shared this conviction.' They also addressed questions regarding the importance of securing male allies, and how to nurture and pass the baton to the next generation of leaders.

**[Female C-Licence FIFA Special Session ]**

On 17 December, as part of the Women's C-Licence programme, we received an online lecture from FIFA expert and women's coach Anna Signeul (Sweden) as a FIFA Special Session. Drawing from her own story as a coach, she spoke about key aspects and abilities that proved important, alongside trends in women's football across Europe. This provided inspiration and motivation for the participants. Comments from attendees included, 'I resonated with the philosophy player-centred development,' and questions were raised about how she manages relationships with players' parents when coaching.



● **AFC Women's Football Conference**

The AFC Women's Football Conference was held in Malaysia from 12 to 14 November 2024. Discussions took place on the current state of women's football in Asia, the performance of Asian teams on the world stage, the development of AFC competitions, and what must be done to overcome barriers to the development of women's football.

● **FIFA COACH EDUCATOR'S DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY**

A FIFA-organised training workshop for coaching tutor candidates was held at JFA Dream Field, with seven female participants among the 20 attendees.  
On-site Course 2024 @ JFA Dream Field  
Dates: 27-31 May 2024

● **FIFA TDS Knowledge Exchange UEFA in Zagreb**

This FIFA workshop, implemented in collaboration with each continental confederation since 2022, marks its 11th iteration. TAKEMATSU Ayako participated from Japan.  
Date: 1-4 November 2024  
Location: Zagreb, Croatia  
Content: Gathering and information exchange among technical leaders from various countries involved in youth development  
Confirmation of support from FIFA experts for future TDS plans

**Participant's Comment**

● **FIFA TDS Knowledge Exchange UEFA in Zagreb**

**TAKEMATSU Ayako ,**  
**coach, JFA academy SAKAI**

It proved a valuable opportunity to gain direct insight into the visions and plans held by various nations regarding TDS, alongside the current challenges and difficulties encountered in their implementation. It was highly impressive that every country, despite possessing a long footballing history and occupying a leading position globally, particularly in Europe, maintained a strong, open attitude towards further learning. It was also evident that each association is genuinely committed to the development of women's football, not merely superficially. Moving forward, talent identification and development will increasingly require associations and clubs to join hands and fulfil their respective roles. It became clear that nations are already trialling approaches tailored to their cultures and structures, and we identified examples that Japan could reference and adopt. Particularly with the annual U-17 Women's World Cup commencing next year, we must prepare with a long-term perspective, anticipating both the positive impacts and the challenges this will bring. We explored the topic from various angles, but a common thread throughout the four days was this: 'The path to talent development is never singular, nor is it smooth. Coaches must not limit or predetermine a player's potential. Each individual player experiences their own ups and downs, and the timing of when their potential blossoms varies greatly.

● **WOMEN'S LEAGUES FORUM**

To advance women's football worldwide, the world's leading women's top leagues have joined forces, establishing the Women's Leagues Forum in San Diego on 10 November 2023. Jessica Berman, Chair of the American professional women's league NWSL, and Annika Gralls of Sweden serve as co-chairs, with TAKATA, Chair of Japan's WE League, also listed as a member of the board. The objective is for women's leagues to collaborate in order to pool insights, share best practices, enhance the commercial value of women's football, and, as professional women's leagues, contribute to improving the global environment for women's football. While women's leagues independent of their national associations remain few worldwide, the rise of women's football in recent years has been meteoric. The NWSL secured a



Above all, it is crucial to establish a system capable of nurturing every single one.' This is a mindset JFA coaches must continually bear in mind when working with regional players. These four days proved eye-opening, yielding wisdom and insights unattainable through daily routine. We intend to share this information with JFA coaches and academy staff, using it as vital material to consider what we can do for the future development of female talent. Furthermore, we will rely on and strengthen the valuable connections forged with leaders from other nations during this event, continuously updating our knowledge.





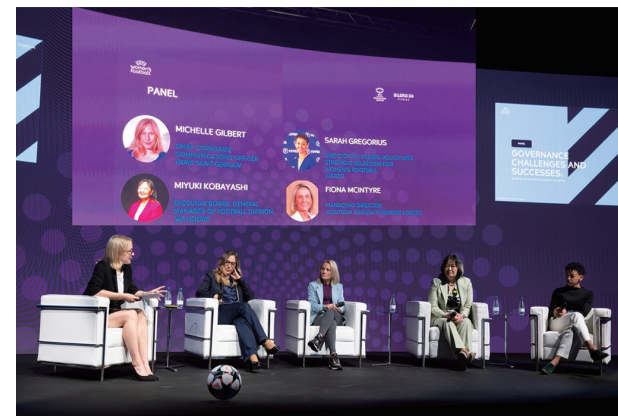
record-breaking \$240 million (£170 million) domestic broadcast rights deal for the 2024 season in women's sport. Furthermore, the English women's league gained independence from the FA in 2024. As a pioneer among the world's top women's football leagues, Japan will collaborate with other nations, share information, and drive the development of Japanese women's football.

#### ● UEFA BUSINESS CASE FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) holds its annual UEFA Business Case for Women's Football conference on the day of the UEFA Women's Champions League final. The 2023/24 season final between FC Barcelona and Olympique Lyon drew a crowd of 50,827 to San Mamés Stadium in Bilbao, Spain. The conference, held earlier that morning, brought together representatives from UEFA member associations to share the latest developments on topics including talent development, governance, and marketing.

The WE League was invited as a panellist on governance, with Director Miyuki Kobayashi taking the stage. Numerous questions

arose from the audience regarding entry criteria, which stipulate the appointment of women and the handling of players' maternity and childcare leave. Pioneering globally by mandating training costs and organisational structures incorporating female executives, the WE League – alongside its name, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT LEAGUE – stands as a prominent presence within women's football worldwide.



#### WE ACTION at the Final of 2024-25 WE League Kracie Cup

The Jissen Women's University, located in Shibuya Ward, collaborated with the WE League to implement a special programme spearheaded by female university students. This programme aimed for the students to devise concrete measures to boost the WE League after approximately two months of preparation. With the 2024/25 season's Kracie Cup final as their ultimate goal, the students explored ways to generate interest in the WE League through attending and experiencing football matches.

Within the programme, we leveraged the unique perspective of female university students to devise initiatives that resonate with younger generations. For social media posts encouraging

match attendance, we carefully crafted designs and copy to effectively communicate the appeal of the games. Furthermore, on match days, we ran foot care workshops and chair-based exercise programmes within the National Stadium, creating spaces where spectators could feel more connected to the sport.



©WE LEAGUE



©WE LEAGUE

#### WE Education for WE League Players

The WE League conducts an online training programme for all players, the 'WE League Player Training', prior to the season's commencement. This year marked the fourth iteration of the training, held under the theme 'Leveraging Your Strengths'. The rookie training for new signings, held prior to the full training session, took place this year in a new format: a joint, in-person residential event with the Nadeshiko League. Forty-nine WE League players and fifty-four Nadeshiko League players participated. Despite the differences between professional and amateur status, these top female footballers, united by a life centred around the game, took a step forward towards their individual goals. The WE League's full training session saw participation from 177 players. During the flagship lecture themed "What it Means to be a Professional", players took centre stage, actively posing questions to the speakers. Morning speaker Takeshi Okada, drawing from his experience founding Imabari FC, offered powerful words: 'The WE League might not succeed immediately, but it's vital to believe in your own value and continue striving forward through effort..

In the afternoon, Mr Kozo TASHIMA, who launched the WE League as the President of JFA, reiterated the importance of the league's founding principles to the players. 'While there are business aspects, I believe a professional league can only be considered successful once its core ideals – such as the advancement of women – are realised,' he stated.



WE LEAGUE official Web-site

<https://youtu.be/YlpSXX0jOZs?si=cbEWybJeCNJwmp5t>



©WE LEAGUE





## Business development, supply chain and marketing activities

### JFA Together with the Partner companies

The JFA, together with its partner companies, is undertaking initiatives that start with social issues, fostering co-creation to generate positive impact for the football family and society at large.

#### ●adidas/JFA joint project “HER TEAM”



©JFA/adidas

This project, a collaboration between the JFA and adidas, aims to address the challenge that one in five female footballers quit the sport upon reaching the age of 13. It focuses on supporting the establishment of girls' football clubs at the crucial junior high school age group, which is identified as a bottleneck. From the inaugural year 2020 through 2022, ten teams were established annually, with thirty teams added in 2023, totalling sixty newly founded teams through this initiative. Participating teams receive support including team uniforms, football clinics, and the HER TEAM CUP.

#### ●MS&AD Cup 2024

MS&AD Insurance Group Holdings, Inc. commenced its special sponsorship of Japan national team matches in 2015. In 2024, it provided special sponsorship for the 'MS&AD Cup 2024 – Noto Peninsula Earthquake Recovery Support Match: Ganbarō Noto', held in Kanazawa as a recovery support match.

**Match** 2024.7.13. vs Ghana women's national team@ Kanazawa, Ishikawa

The week before the match, an “MS&AD Football Clinic” was held in Kanazawa, the host city, for primary school children. Around 100 parents and children took part, enjoying football alongside NAKAZAWA Yuji and SAWA Homare.

#### ●MIZUHO BLUE DREAM MATCH 2024



©JFA

Mizuho Financial Group, Inc. (President and CEO: Masahiro Kihara) and the Japan Football Association (JFA) held the Nadeshiko Japan (Japan Women's National Team) international friendly match on Saturday, 26 October as the 'MIZUHO BLUE DREAM MATCH 2024', with special sponsorship from Mizuho. This marks the second consecutive year of special sponsorship, following last October's 'MIZUHO BLUE DREAM MATCH 2023' (SAMURAI BLUE [Japan National Team] vs. Canada National Team).



©JFA/PR

#### ● Value Co-creation with MS&AD Nadeshiko Tsubomi Project



©JFA/PR

The JFA×MS&AD Nadeshiko “Tsubomi” Project has commenced, aiming to support the establishment and operation of football clubs catering to junior high school girls, disseminate case studies, and create playing environments. The inaugural event, the “JFA×MS&AD Nadeshiko ‘Tsubomi’ Field”, was held on 17 November in Mito City, Ibaraki Prefecture. Approximately 70 junior high school girls' players, who usually play together in combined teams from Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba, and Noto in Ishikawa Prefecture, gathered on the pitch. They enjoyed a friendly match alongside six former Nadeshiko Japan players who were guest participants.

#### ● Nadeshiko Travel Case Provider Agreement(Samsonite [American Tourister])

The Japan Football Association (JFA) has entered into a JFA supporter agreement with Samsonite Japan Co., Ltd., which operates the global suitcase brand American Tourister, for Nadeshiko Japan (the Japan Women's National Team). American Tourister, a brand that has continually evolved over more than 90 years to serve all travellers who enjoy their journeys, is supporting the comfortable travel of Nadeshiko Japan as a suitcase provider. This support is provided through

the supply of suitcases from the company's travel collection, CURIO.



©JFA/PR

#### ● APA Hotel APA President's CurryNadeshiko Japan Version



©JFA/PR

The Japan Football Association (JFA) and APA Hotel Co., Ltd. (APA Hotel), a JFA National Team Partner, have concluded an agreement regarding the Official Curry of the Japan National Team. Since March 2023, APA Hotel has supported all categories of the Japan National Football Team as a JFA National Team Partner. The company is now further strengthening its support for the team by launching three Japan National Team packaging products: 'APA President's Curry SAMURAI BLUE', 'APA President's Curry Nadeshiko Japan', and 'APA President's Rice Japan National Football Team (Packaged Rice)'.

#### ● JFA Magical Field inspired by Disney Family Football Festival 'First Touch'

As part of efforts to promote girls' football, the 'First Touch' family football festival – a parent-child participation event primarily targeting girls in the lower primary years with no prior football experience – was held at 12 venues nationwide (two venues were cancelled due to inclement weather). Participation was free of charge, with participants receiving an original commemorative T-shirt and ball as gifts.



©JFA/PR



WE

LEAGUE

Title Partner

Press Conference Announcement

From the 2024/25 season, SOMPO Holdings, Inc. has entered into a ‘WE League Title Partner Agreement’. This agreement was reached as the WE League’s philosophy – ‘to contribute to the realisation and development of a society where dreams and diverse ways of life flourish, and each individual shines, through women’s football and sport’ – aligns with the SOMPO Group’s vision of ‘a future filled with “security, safety and health”’. At the title partner announcement press conference, a talk session featuring female executives active within the SOMPO Group and Chair TAKATA(at the time) took place, featuring a passionate discussion on realising a diverse society. The SOMPO Group is working towards realising its vision by implementing social contribution activities, including WE ACTION DAY, in collaboration with the league and individual clubs.Furthermore, Kracie Inc., the league’s Silver Partner since the 2023/24 season, has become the Title Partner for the WE League Cup in the 2024-25 season. Kracie, whose corporate slogan is ‘Tomorrows you can be passionate about’, shares the WE League’s goal of realising ‘a life where everyone is the protagonist’ and has undertaken various initiatives through the WE League Kracie Cup.The WE League enters its fourth season. The circle of like-minded partners who share its philosophy is gradually expanding.



SOMPO Holdings official Web-site

<https://stories.sompo-hd.com/ja/people-culture/partnering-with-weleague/>



Kracie, Ltd.official Web-site

[https://www.kracie.co.jp/release/10191499\\_3833.html](https://www.kracie.co.jp/release/10191499_3833.html)

● Collaboration with SOMPO Group: "Disaster Prevention JaPanda Project"

As a specific initiative for WE ACTION DAY, Cerezo Osaka Yanmar Ladies collaborated with SOMPO Group, the WE League Title Partner, to implement the “Disaster Prevention Japan Project”. On the day, a lecture was delivered to players entitled “Disaster Preparedness × Diversity × Sport: Preparing for Disaster Today and Taking the Next Action”. Evacuation centres are places where many people gather, regardless of gender, age, or disability status. Within such settings, gender-specific challenges are particularly likely to arise. The lecture focused on how to act in such situations and what preparations and mindset are beneficial to adopt.



WE

LEAGUE

Sponsorship Objectives of WE League Partner Companies

(regarding Diversity & Inclusion)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| SOMPO Group                                       | The SOMPO Group, through its collaboration with the WE League, will strive to advance DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) while tackling various social and regional challenges. We aim to co-create a future brimming with peace of mind, safety and health.   |
| DAIHATSU MOTOR CO., LTD.                          | aihatsu supports women's football.We want girls to become even more passionate about the game they love.We want girls who love football to dream more freely.From nursery and primary school pupils, through high school girls' football, the Nadeshiko League, and on to the professional WE LEAGUE. DAIHATSU, united with its locally rooted dealerships,will continue to stand alongside the dreams of all women and girls who dedicate themselves to football.              |
| ASAHI KASEI HOME PRODUCTS CORPORATION             | Communicating information from a sustainability perspective (supporting the balance of work and household duties through time-saving techniques, and contributing to a society of gender equality)  |
| PERSOL HOLDINGS CO., LTD. PERSOL CAREER CO., LTD. | As a creating'Working Well-being' company, we support athletes in developing flexible and diverse ways of working and career paths.Through career support for players and staff involved in the 'WE League', we contribute to expanding opportunities for women's further advancement while advancing our group vision: 'Work and Smile.'   |
| Kracie, Ltd.                                      | Together with the WE League, we will realise a life where everyone becomes the protagonist.   |
| B's International Inc. (X-girl)                   | Amidst increasing diversity of choices, X-girl joins forces with the WE League to initiate the'GIRL'S MOVEMENT' – empowering contemporary young women to live authentically.We wish to co-create with WE League, from the perspectives of fashion and lifestyle, their philosophy: 'Through women's football and sport, we contribute to realising and developing a society overflowing with diverse dreams and ways of life, where each individual shines.'                    |
| DAZN Japan Investment GK                          | DAZN and all its 360-degree channels aim to convey the appeal of women's football and women's sport. To enrich society through sports culture and the power of sport.   |
| The Yomiuri Shimbun                               | The Yomiuri Shimbun, in addition to its sports coverage, engages in activities to convey the excellence of sport through the promotion of professional sports and the hosting of various sporting events. Becoming a partner of the WE League in 2024 is part of these activities. We will actively support not only the league as a whole, but also individual teams and players, utilising the advantages of being a national newspaper and the strength of our group.        |
| KPMG Consulting Co.,Ltd.                          | Building mechanisms and foundations to sustainably foster empathy, co-creation, mutual prosperity, and mindset transformation among regions, businesses, individuals, and teams. Towards advancing the 'WE ACTION' initiative and creating a social change movement, we will jointly undertake: ① Formulating value creation narratives ② Implementing the WE ACTION co-creation platform and social value calculation ③ Promoting activation initiatives linked with WE ACTION |



Scenes from the WE ACTION DAY held by CEREZO OSAKA YANMAR LADIES and the SOMPO Group. Marking the partnership between the SOMPO Group and the WE League, initiatives were implemented to convey the importance of disaster prevention as part of WE ACTION. (SOMPO Group)



A session titled 'Join KAIHORI Ayumi for a Goalkeeper Experience & Think About Your Dreams!' was held for primary school pupils. This was conducted in collaboration with the PERSOL Group, which shares the belief in engaging with individuals possessing diverse values and supporting each person's way of working and living. (PERSOL)



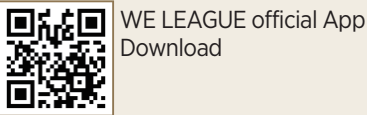
● WE League Official Mascot ‘Weena’

The WE League’s official mascot was created with the aim of broadening the fan base, hoping to spark interest not only among football fans but also among young women and children who may not typically follow the sport. We intend to expand our activities, visiting various locations to help many people feel closer to the WE League. Named “Winner”, it embodies both the “We” of the WE League and the concept of a “winner”. During the 2023/24 season, she visited the home stadiums of all clubs.



● WE League official application

To bring the WE League closer to you, we have launched the official WE League app. By consolidating content from various media outlets and social media platforms within the app, we can deliver the latest WE League updates directly to fans.



● Women’s Football Hub in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo ‘Home of .WE’

In October 2023, the “Home of .WE” opened in Shibuya, serving as the information hub for the WE League and Japanese women’s football. Beyond displaying exhibits related to women’s football and showing match results, the “Home of .WE” also sells merchandise featuring the WE League mascot, “Weena”. It is a place where visitors can feel closer to women’s football. Exhibits include the WE League championship trophy, allowing visitors to fully experience the current state of Japanese women’s football.

Activity Reports

Principle 6

Leadership & Participation in the community

Initiatives in the 47 FAs

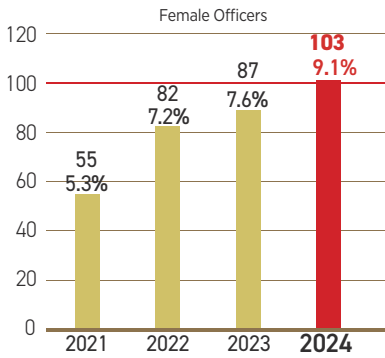
The governance code for general sports organisations, unlike that for central sports federations, does not set numerical targets for organisational management or composition. However, as these are organisations with a high degree of public interest, comparable to National Federations (NFs), it is important to work towards ensuring diversity among officers and others, while referring to the code for central sports federations. Clubs, leagues, and federations should also follow this approach. The table below shows the breakdown of the number and proportion of female officers within the 47 prefectural football associations (FA). To increase the number of officers, it is vital that the entire football community ensures women are present in sufficient numbers across all areas, enabling them to realise their potential. The 47FA holds board elections every two years. We produce an annual WEPs report, which we share with the 47FA and its member organisations.

We recognise that this has led to an increase in the number of associations and organisations becoming more conscious of these issues. In 2024, a new 47FA Chair was appointed. There are 12 Vice Presidents, and the total number of EXCO members continues to increase annually. The number of FAs appointing multiple female directors is also increasing. On the other hand, while the number of FAs with zero female EXCO members is decreasing, there are currently six such FAs. Fourteen FAs have just one female director. It is difficult for a single individual to exert significant influence. We would encourage FAs to prepare for the future. We will continue to share this report, provide training opportunities, and disseminate best practices (such as positive organisational changes resulting from increasing female directors) to further share initiatives aimed at improving this issue and work together to address it.

▶ the number and proportion of female officers within the 47FA

|  | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Female Officers      | Total            | Rate                              |
|--|------|------|------|------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| President                              | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 103<br>[87]          | 1,137<br>[1,208] | 9.1%<br>[7.2%]                    |
| Vice President                         | 5    | 9    | 10   | 12   |                      |                  |                                   |
| General Secretary                      | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    |                      |                  |                                   |
| Standing Member of Executive Committee | 3    | 4    | 5    | 8    |                      |                  |                                   |
| Executive Committee Member             | 47   | 68   | 71   | 82   |                      |                  |                                   |
| Auditor                                | 2    | 7    | 7    | 8    |                      |                  |                                   |
| Co-opted Member of Executive Committee | 6    | 4    | 5    | 4    |                      |                  |                                   |
| TOTAL                                  | 63   | 93   | 99   | 115  | JFA Congress Members | 3                | Nagano FA, Wakayama FA, WE League |

a new 47FA Chair was appointed



▶ The number of FAs for the number of female officer

| The number of Female Officers | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |       |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 0                             | 15   | 12   | 10   | 6    | 12.8% |
| 1                             | 13   | 13   | 13   | 14   | 29.8% |
| 2                             | 13   | 11   | 13   | 10   | 21.3% |
| 3                             | 5    | 3    | 4    | 7    | 14.9% |
| 4                             | 0    | 3    | 2    | 4    | 8.5%  |
| 5                             | 1    | 3    | 3    | 5    | 10.6% |
| 6                             | 0    | 2    | 1    | 0    | -     |
| 7                             | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 2.1%  |

▶ The number of FAs for the rate of female officer

| The rate of Female Officers | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |       |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 0-1%                        | 15   | 12   | 10   | 6    | 12.8% |
| 1-5%                        | 9    | 10   | 13   | 9    | 19.1% |
| 5-10%                       | 13   | 12   | 13   | 12   | 25.5% |
| 10-15%                      | 8    | 5    | 4    | 9    | 19.1% |
| 15-20%                      | 1    | 7    | 2    | 6    | 12.8% |
| 20-25%                      | 0    | 1    | 3    | 5    | 10.6% |
| 25-30%                      | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0    | -     |



Case of the FAs – Hokkaido FA

Hokkaido FA, under the leadership of two female vice-presidents, is focusing its efforts on realising the Nadeshiko VISION – a society where women shine through football. 【PASS TO THE FUTURE: Women Supporting Football in Hokkaido vol.2】

Inspired by the JFA’s “Football × Career × Future” initiative, Hokkaido FA published a booklet in 2021 introducing women active in Hokkaido as coaches, referees, and administrative staff. It served as a tool to share ways to continue involvement in football and the situation across Hokkaido’s regions, receiving considerable positive feedback. Three years on, so many women are now active across Hokkaido that a second edition was eagerly anticipated, leading to its publication on 8 March 2024. This second instalment includes pages introducing businesses involved in women’s football and features male staff members working within these organisations, offering insight into the collective effort across Hokkaido to boost women’s football.

HKFA official Web-site

<https://www.hfa-dream.or.jp/committee/women/>



【Online Lecture: Persevering with Challenges – The Key to Growth Learning from Two Female International Referees】

In 2024, we hosted lectures by two international referees from Hokkaido, Ms OIWA Mayumi and Ms TESHIROGI Naomi, who spoke about the meaning of persistent endeavour and the growth and learning gained through challenge. Not only referees but also numerous athletes, primarily high school students, attended the lectures. They received significant inspiration and it also provided an opportunity to show respect for referees.

.WE Initiatives in the community

In June 2023, the WE League entered into a cooperation and partnership agreement with Shibuya Ward, which shares the philosophy of ‘striving to realise a diverse society’. In September 2024, Chair Takada (at the time), Community Organiser Kaihori, and Weena visited Shibuya Ward Office for direct discussions with the Mayor of Shibuya. During this courtesy visit, they reviewed past initiatives, discussed new measures to strengthen collaboration, and advanced the consideration of concrete

action plans. Both parties shared their respective challenges and confirmed a direction to utilise the power of sport towards their resolution. Specific activities include participation in Shibuya Ward’s Sports Festival and conducting morning greeting campaigns at primary schools and kindergartens. Furthermore, leveraging Shibuya Ward’s network, collaborative events with the B.League’s Alvark Tokyo were also realised.

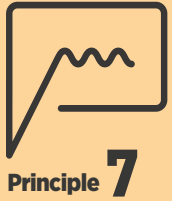


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Activity Reports



Transparency, measurement and reporting

This report itself represents our commitment to these principles. We will prepare an annual report to track the current situation and outcomes, share best practices, and persistently tackle each challenge one by one. Last year, by preparing and publishing our inaugural report, we realised that it delivered information to the wider football community and prompted consideration within many organisations. By sharing this report within the football world, we aim to broaden and deepen understanding

of the issue itself, thereby increasing the number of like-minded individuals who share this awareness.

|             | JFA  | JFA & WE LEAGUE   | WE LEAGUE  |
|-------------|--|---|--|
| Principle 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● NADESHIKO vision</li><li>● JFA Executive Committee</li><li>● JFA Women’s Football Day</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● WE League Launched</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Name and Logo of WE League</li><li>● WE League Mission &amp; Vision</li><li>● Entry criteria established to advance our mission</li><li>● WE League CREDO</li><li>● The Value Creation Story</li><li>● “WE LEAGUE TROPHY” for the champion</li><li>● WE ACTION DAY</li><li>● ALL WE ACTION DAY</li></ul> |
| Principle 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The Declaration Access For All</li><li>● Number of women in the football family</li><li>● Number of women among JFA executive members and staffs</li><li>● Female Coaches</li><li>● Female coaches in global football</li><li>● Female Referees</li><li>● National Teams of disability footballs</li></ul> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Female Staff in WE League &amp; Nadeshiko League</li><li>● Visualisation of Women’s Appointments in the WE League</li><li>● WE STATEMENT 2024</li><li>● Various roles taken by women in football</li></ul>   |
| Principle 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● FIFA Female Health Project</li><li>● Pink Ribbon Campaign</li><li>● Support for female referees during pregnancy and after childbirth</li><li>● Players’ children on the bench at the O-30 and O-40 tournaments</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Welfare Officer system</li><li>● Respect and fair play</li><li>● Support for active players during pregnancy and postpartum</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● WE ACTION MEETING “Safeguarding”</li><li>● Opening of the WE League Advice Centre</li><li>● Childcare Facilities</li></ul>   |
| Principle 4 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● JFA/WE League Women Leadership Programme JWLP</li><li>● Learning from the abroad</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● WE ACTION at the Final of 2024-25 WE League Kracie Cup</li><li>● Education for WE League Players</li></ul>   |
| Principle 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Together with the Partner companies</li></ul>  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Title Partner Press Conference Announcement</li><li>● Sponsorship Objectives of WE League Partner Companies</li></ul>  |
| Principle 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Initiatives in the 47 FAs</li></ul>  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Initiatives in the community</li></ul>   |
| Principle 7 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Annual report</li></ul>   |  |

## TOPICS 2024

### The 33rd Olympic Games (2024/Paris)

The Olympic Games were held in Paris from 24 July to 11 August 2024 (football competition dates: 25 July to 10 August). This tournament featured a highly selective field of 12 participating nations. Following the Asian qualifiers held up to February this year, Japan and Australia represented Asia. The result saw Japan progress from the group stage in second place. They faced the United States in the quarter-finals, losing 1-2 after extra time to finish in the last eight. The tournament concluded with the United States claiming the gold medal.



JFA official Web-site

<https://www.jfa.jp/nadeshikojapan/news/00034207/>

### FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup 2024 Colombia AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2024 Dominican Republic AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup

In 2024, two youth tournaments—the AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup and the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup—were held. The U-20 team finished as runners-up at the AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup held in Uzbekistan in March, and also secured second place at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup held in Colombia in September. Japan's MATSUKUBO Manaka was awarded the Silver Ball, HIJIKATA Maya received the Bronze Boot, and the team was honoured with the Fair Play Award.

The U-17 team finished as runners-up at the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup held in Indonesia in May, and reached the quarter-finals at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup held in the Dominican Republic from October to November. Furthermore, at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup, female head coaches were appointed for 13 out of 24 teams (54.2%), while at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, they were appointed for 9 out of 16 teams (56.3%).

### AFC Annual Awards

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) held its 2023 Annual Awards Ceremony, the 'AFC Annual Awards 2023', where forward SEIKE Kiko (Urawa Reds Ladies → Brighton) was selected as the Women's Player of the Year. Additionally, Miyo Okamoto was selected as the Women's Youth Coach of the Year.



### FIFA Women's Football Strategy 2024-2027

FIFA published its Women's Football Strategy 2024-2027 in August 2024. This updates the strategy first issued in 2018 for the next cycle, monitoring the rapidly developing women's football. 'Women's football is experiencing exponential growth, and the passion and potential for this sport offer significant untapped opportunities, representing football's greatest growth opportunity,' stating that the key objectives are to expand

participation, promote commercial value, and build foundations.



JFA official Web-site

[https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/16fe7c8e9a285f15/original/FIFA-Women-s-Football-Strategy-2024-2027\\_EN.pdf](https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/16fe7c8e9a285f15/original/FIFA-Women-s-Football-Strategy-2024-2027_EN.pdf)

### All Japan High School Women's Football Championship

From the 33rd tournament commencing on 29 December 2024, the participating teams will comprise 47 teams selected from the 47 prefectural associations, plus one team each from the five designated consideration slots (Miyagi Prefecture, Tokyo Metropolis, Shizuoka Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture), totalling

52 teams.

Opportunities to compete in the national tournament will expand across all prefectures. The development of girls' football in high schools is anticipated.

### The first-ever striker and goalkeeper camp for women was held with men and women participating together as part of FIFA TDS,

As part of FIFA Talent Development Scheme programme, we held a training programme aimed at developing strikers and goalkeepers. This marked the first simultaneous men's and women's camp, and the inaugural striker camp specifically for women. By combining the two positions of striker and goalkeeper, the programme aimed to be beneficial for both roles.

Furthermore, by holding the camp for both genders simultaneously, the objective was to identify common challenges within Japan alongside gender-specific issues. This approach seeks to further develop the domestic training environment and cultivate players with greater international competitiveness.

### The 78th Japan Games

The 78th Japan Games was held in Saga. For the first time since the junior women's category was established in 2021, two women's categories were contested: senior women and junior women U16 (the senior category alternates between men and women annually). Hiroshima Prefecture won the senior women's title, while Shizuoka Prefecture won the junior women U16 title.



Saga Pref.





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