

Audio file

[119083-TheCorinthians.mp3](#)

Transcript

Speaker 1

Is that the modern ball? You're joking. Well, I love this one. This is so light. It's not true. No wonder they're all fantastic players. How a lot would have knocked them off the pitch. This is so light. Marvellous. If I was a few years younger, I'd be at it, yes.

Speaker 2

Have you ever heard the wording of the 1921 band?

Speaker 3

No.

Speaker 4

Complaints having been made as to football being played by women, council felt impelled to express the strong opinion that the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and should not be encouraged.

Speaker 5

Everybody thought it was a joke, girls playing football.

Speaker 6

It's for boys, it's not for girls.

Speaker 5

They said to me, women's football.

Speaker 2

Curving it with your left foot, your right foot.

Speaker 7

I used to like fouling people.

Speaker 8

What I love most of all was my sliding tackles.

Speaker 4

Complaints have also been made as to the conditions under which some of the matches have been arranged.

Speaker 7

That's a load of crap, that, you know.

Speaker 1

Beware rebels against the system.

Speaker 6

Stop her, she's only a girl.

Speaker 7

If you can't stop them, drop them.

Speaker 6

For God's sake, stop her.

Speaker 4

The council requests the clubs belonging to the association refuse the use of their grounds for such matches.

Speaker 2

One word, *****.

Speaker 1

What do your boyfriends think of you playing for?

Speaker 6

Looks like afternoon with you.

Speaker 1

Can you tell me who the Corinthians were? The Corinthians were a ladies' football team that was run from Fog Lane Park in Didsbury.

Speaker 5

Just a band of girls that wanted to play football and were determined to play football. And nothing would have stopped them. Nothing would have stopped them. And me, I'd do it all again tomorrow.

Speaker 1

They would not recognise ladies football, so Percy Ashley decided he would form his own football team. Percy Ashley was a football scout for Bolton Wanderers. Percy had a daughter, Doris, who was practically deaf, but who was a phenomenal footballer. She was the best football girl I'd ever seen in my life.

Speaker 5

She could pick her to pass like Kevin De Bruyne. And she could dribble and she could shoot.

Speaker 6

And she was putting the ball anywhere she fancied. You know, just God, she's phenomenal.

Speaker 7

He set up the Korean team so she could be in the team to play. And she did, and she was very, very good.

Speaker 1

And he wanted to establish a team around his daughter that would become world beaters. And that is how the Corinthians began in 1949.

Speaker 7

I don't know why it wasn't suitable for him in. Maybe because we had breasts and we might get it with the ball. Maybe because we had periods. You never know.

Speaker 8

The FA did not like women encroaching on the men's game of football, and that's what it boiled down to.

Speaker 4

As the sport grew, the Football Association greatly increased in importance.

Speaker 1

They thought that women are still at the kitchen sink and washing all the men's underpants. We didn't want to do that anymore. Why should we?

Speaker 4

Today, it is still the controlling body for English football.

Speaker 1

I think Mr Ashley was very determined to show the FA that women could play football as well as any man.

Speaker 6

He was always sort of in trouble with the FA because he was always pushing that idea that women should be allowed to play football on the proper grounds, not on some park.

Speaker 4

A David and Goliath war was declared in Manchester today. The contest will be between the Football Association and Mr Percy Ashley and 11 Sturdy Lancashire lasses who play in his Manchester Corinthians ladies football team. This morning they told the FA, you can't stop us from playing football.

Speaker 5

Well, he wasn't happy about it at all and he did write to the FA and he wrote to the papers and he was always agitating about it.

Speaker 1

I think the Corinthians were in a battle with the FA.

Speaker 7

It's a big responsibility, let's put it like that on you, isn't it? Well, people say so, but I don't exactly feel it, although I know it is there.

Speaker 4

But I don't feel it. My use of some ingenuity and a good deal of effort, Mr Percy Ashley has fixed up the match between his Corinthians ladies football team and London ladies, which was ruled out by the FA. To work this out, Mr Ashley left Manchester at 4am by motorcycle and returned from London the same day at 10pm. which for a man of 60s got going.

Speaker 6

Mr. Ashley or Percy, he was a phenomena.

Speaker 9

He was one on his own. He's a very, very jolly bloke, always very friendly, but very strict.

Speaker 5

He was very professional. At some stage, he'd had a shop in Great Jackson Street, and he bred pedigree mice, but they were some lovely mice, they really were. And he got trophies and everything for the mice.

Speaker 1

He put his white mice into the shows and his football girls onto the field.

Speaker 6

See these girls, they are as good as Real Madrid. He would say, and he believed it.

Speaker 7

Oh I love them boots. Tell me what memories these bring back. Now, I couldn't afford a pair of football boots. But a neighbour called me over to her door and said, I've got something for you, Frieda. I said, and she produced a pair of football boots that were very, very similar to these. My name's Frieda Ashton and I played 10 to half. And these, it brings back very happy memories. I could shed a tear. It was important to me football. When I played, I played to the best of my ability and I think my ability was very, very good. My mother, who didn't like me playing football, I'd come home from school with these nice frocks that I had on and they'd be ripped at the waist where I'd been diving about playing football. I'd get a hole in me right foot because that was the foot I kicked with. We can't afford any more shoes. Stop playing bloody football. Tell you what, I felt like the queen. When I got these boots on, I felt like the queen. I couldn't wait to get all the lads that were off school. Come on, let's go and play football. Look at me boots, look at me boots. I'm there with me boots in the middle of the road and there's me mother coming home from work. I said, and I was thrilled with these boots. Mum, mum! And I'm pointing at my feet and I see her look over and go, Oh my God, look at her, Frida. She's got a pair of bloody football boots on now. All her friends were laughing, which I thought I didn't mind them laughing. I've got a pair of boots, my first ever pair of football boots, isn't that marvellous?

Speaker 10

I was a tomboy. All the boys used to come and play, come to my mum's house and say, can you and Marlene come and play football with us? Because I was one of the best players. I was the first one picked to play for them. My name was Marlene Goddard when I first started playing for the Crinchians and I played number nine centre forward. When you're playing with the boys, you do try to beat them, don't you? then all of a sudden you might see a copper coming round the corner so everybody would scatter.

Speaker 1

I think in the 50s people didn't think about ladies football because since the war years it had been truly banned. They still wanted to play the game but there was still a lot of

opposition. We had to keep our mouths shut actually and it was very difficult to speak to anyone and say, I play football, because they just didn't believe you.

Speaker 6

It's a boys game, stop playing that. It wasn't ladylike. People had strict ideas about what a girl or a female should be, who's pretty and delicate and not to be rough or get scratches on your legs. My name's Monica Curran. I played on the floor in line. What girls were allowed to do was actually silly soft stuff. Like you could wheel a doll in a pram. Or you could go to a neighbour and say, can I take your baby for a walk? You know, kiddies used to do that. They didn't trust a child with the baby and they go wandering around the streets. I didn't like that. I really didn't go on my nerves. It's very funny, but you keep it from your classmates.

Speaker 8

My name is Margaret Shepherd, known when I was playing for the Corinthians as Tiny Taylor. I played centre half at #5. I never told anybody that I played football because there was a stigma.

Speaker 5

You should be staying at home and washing the pots and ironing shirts. Not running about playing football and coming uncovered in mud. Who'd want to marry anybody like that?

Speaker 10

I used to be playing in the streets with the boys and they used to say to me, why don't you go and play football for a ladies team? So when I went to Fogg Lane Park and saw all these girls, you know, kicking a ball about, I went, Wow! they said, Can you kick a ball? and when they saw how far I could kick a ball, you're in.

Speaker 5

This is Fogg Lane Park in Didsbury and this is where the famous Manchester Corinthians used to play on train. We had to play on park pitches and Fogg Lane because the FA wouldn't let us play on any ground affiliated to the FA. My name is Myra Lipniski and I played left half for the Corinthians. I joined the Corinthians in 1954. I was 18. I'm one of the oldest surviving members of the original team. It feels rather nostalgic really. There's a lot of memories attached to these playing fields. Good ones. I can remember every little thing. I can remember the ball, how I bounce when the ground was frosty. I know the marks were on your legs when it hit you and when it's raining. Yeah. I had the time of my life on these playing fields. Yes. Because that was our picture over there. And if I look across there, I can see a lot of ghosts there, you know, from the past. I went to Fogg Lane Park and when we got there, Percy said, I believe you would like to join and

I said yes. And I stepped on this field over in that corner. There was a lot of teams playing, mostly they were men, but this one team that I was interested in were all girls. And I was really amazed to see how good they could play. I'd never seen ladies play football before. In fact, I didn't even know it existed. It was awesome, really. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I mean, they were dainty off the pitch, but get them on the pitch and they were anything but dainty. Oh, I knew I'd like to join it right from the word go.

Speaker 8

I didn't even think about the FA banning us. To me, I was playing football. It didn't matter where, whether it was a plowed field.

Speaker 5

We've played on rugby pitches, but Foggling Park was very handy for Percy because he only lived across the road. We've actually played on fields where cows had been grazing and those cow pats all over the place. You know, and you'd go home and you thought, what's this? I've got stuck in my air, you know. Nasty.

Speaker 7

Everything was very basic.

Speaker 10

I don't remember this grass this long, but I remember the mud. I think everybody remembers the mud. You know what the leather balls were like, how heavy they were. Trying to click them out of the mud, it was, you know, hard. Some of the young ones couldn't even get it about 5 yards away, just mud, mud, mud.

Speaker 5

Sometimes we didn't have a pitch because the men were playing on it.

Speaker 3

We used to play in snow, ice, fog. Pauline Hindley and I played #8, which was inside right. You name it, we always played, but the men's teams used to stop and they used to watch us.

Speaker 10

I can remember them coming through with the buckets with the watering and everything.

Speaker 7

There was no showers or anywhere to wash. It was probably 2 buckets between 22 people, but if you weren't quick and got to the front, well, you'd had it. Like it was muddy by about 10 washes.

Speaker 5

The rest of it was a duck pond quite close to 5, and it was cold, and we had to break the ice sometimes.

Speaker 10

When you think of what we went through those days, you didn't.

Speaker 9

Like going in a sport shop asking for a pair of football boots. People used to look at you as, oh, you're a bit funny.

Speaker 1

Well, obviously there were no football boots for girls. So what we did was buy them for young boys. And that was the only way we could buy boots. My name is Anne Grimes and I was the Corinthian goalkeeper. When I was a child, my twin brother used to put me against the wall, draw a goalpost around me, and do nothing but kick the ball at me. So I thought goalkeeper was the easiest option. But in those days, there were case balls. It was so heavy. And every time I kicked it, I thought I was going to break my big toe.

Speaker 7

Carinthians was the only team I thought there was that women played for. I didn't know of any other teams. So I used to travel from Manchester to Didsbury, but at 14 that seemed a long way.

Speaker 8

Manchester was 13 miles away and a complete different ball game. It was the big city.

Speaker 1

A lot of the girls were school age and couldn't really afford the bus fares to get to the training ground.

Speaker 7

It made me more determined to play football and play it well.

Speaker 11

As long as I was playing somewhere, that was the main thing. And you had to see us play to believe how good we were.

Speaker 7

People were always saying, God, Frieda, You're playing like a guy.

Speaker 3

I was more a ball player. I just like to dance around them and get past them.

Speaker 1

I love running out and getting the ball off the attackers. I'd get it off them before they'd even thought about kicking it.

Speaker 5

If people passed me once, I'd tried to make sure they didn't do it again, if you know what I mean.

Speaker 10

We had a winning streak of about 102, 120, something like that.

Speaker 5

Apparently a lot of the other teams that were supposed to be very good refused to play us. But what he did was he set up the nomad so that we would have decent opposition to play. They were all part of the Corinthian Football Club.

Speaker 7

It gets a bit boring if you keep winning. Yeah, I think the team had to go abroad to get challenged.

Speaker 4

Portugal, after dusting down England's soccer stars, now wants to see what our women footballers can do. The Manchester Corinthians women's team has been invited to play 3 matches in the country at the end of September. But with the invite was a proviso. You'll have to bring your opponents. Our girls don't play football.

Speaker 1

And he sat us down and said, well, girls, we're all going to Portugal.

Speaker 9

It was like, yeah, FA, we don't need you. We can go and play wherever we want.

Speaker 5

Nobody had ever been on a plane. It was just unreal.

Speaker 1

You have to imagine that a 17-year-old kid that had only been to Blackpool and New Brighton for the day, I definitely was up for going abroad.

Speaker 5

There was nerves in the build-up and there was also a sense of, am I going to get chosen? It was sort of a worry. And the worry about whether your husband would start kicking off, in my case.

Speaker 1

Girls in the 1950s, their job was to meet a boy, get the ring, get married, have the babies and just keep house.

Speaker 5

But that wasn't our case. My husband was very good about me playing football. He used to come along and watch and cheer. He didn't say you mustn't play or... When he saw the bruises on my legs, he didn't say you can't be doing that again next week. he was a good guy and he supported us all the way. It wasn't men in general that were against us playing, it was just the FA. They thought that because you played football that you weren't feminine enough to attract a man. I mean, this is what it was like in those days. I was married in 1956. The day I got married it was pouring with rain. Mr and Mrs Ashley were there and half the team was there. One of the players was my bridesmaid. And the Portugal trip came up in May of 1957. And I said to Mike, there's a possibility of a trip to Portugal. And he said, well, I can't afford to take you, so if you get the opportunity, go for it. And so I did.

Speaker 1

This is my Portuguese scrapbook which is all tattered and torn, a little bit like me. That little flag there was the Red Cross flag that we all had to hold before we played each game because they were our sponsors actually and they paid all our expenses and whatever came out of the grounds went to their charity. They may have really wanted us to be seen as important and serious because we never felt anyone took us seriously.

Speaker 5

We couldn't believe it till we were actually going up the steps.

Speaker 1

You're brilliant. And we flew into Lisbon and I can remember feeling very hot because of the climate and we were all taking our blazers off because Mr Ashley had us in blazers,

skirts and white blouses. Mr Ashley said they don't have any lady football teams here, so it's going to be in the form of exhibition game, if you will. So it was Corinthians against the Nomads.

Speaker 5

The first time we played in a stadium as a team was on the Sporting Lisbon pitch.

Speaker 1

After spending quite a few months with six people and a dog on Fog Lane Park, and then you get into Lisbon.

Speaker 5

And we had proper dressing rooms for the first time in our life, and everybody was absolutely awestruck.

Speaker 1

I felt excited and nervous both at the same time.

Speaker 5

We walked up this long tunnel onto the pitch, and you... emerged from the tunnel and the lights are all shining down onto the pitch and the crowd, 50,000.

Speaker 1

Screaming and shouting at you. It was phenomenal.

Speaker 5

Oh, it was absolutely unreal.

Speaker 1

And we're all little kids from Manchester and we walked onto this ground and we stood there trembling a bit and we said, right girls, come on, let's give it to them. And we just got on that pitch and we played our little hearts out. I had my best experience ever on that team because there was a penalty and I was the goalkeeper. Well, I'm in this goal and this girl came up to me and she said, look, Doris, his daughter, is taking that penalty. Whatever you do, Anne, She said, dive to your right, because she nearly always, 9 times out of 10, will kick that ball to the right-hand side. So there's 45,000 people watching me, my knees are knocking, I'm in the goals. She kicks the ball, I dive to the right and knocked it right round the post. And 45,000 people erupted. They were screaming and clapping and shouting. and I just grew to about 10 feet tall. I was so proud. And that's me, surveying the crowd, in the Avaloud Stadium. There is all of us after the first game coming off. That's his daughter who's been carried off because she

was always the captain. Mr Ashley's carrying the ball up, we don't lose that. I'm in the background there, my hair looks disgraceful. But still, it was a good game. And we were in absolute heaven.

Speaker 5

I remember the fans all mobbing the couch as we were going back to the hotel and shouting at the windows and banging on the windows and wanting autographs. Everywhere we went, we were mobbed.

Speaker 1

When somebody came up to me and said, can I have your autograph? I thought, what's all that about? Well, yes, go on. There was a pathos about this because we were so ecstatic, we were so excited, we were so happy over there and accepting all the respect and adoration, if you will, and then to get back home. And it was like nothing. had happened at all.

Speaker 5

We didn't think the FA would ever lift the ban. It was Sir Stanley Rouse, wasn't it, who said, no, you're not allowed to play and you won't be in my lifetime.

Speaker 1

We went abroad and it opened our eyes. We did very quickly realise that the FA couldn't stop us from playing in any other country. I don't know how Bert Trotman, the then German Manchester City goalkeeper, knew about us, but he wanted to take us round Germany to play these German teams.

Speaker 5

I was working and the phone rang and the lady that I was working with, she said, it's for you. It was on a Friday afternoon. And I went to the phone and it was Percy and he said, can you go to Germany? And I said, when? He said, tonight. I can go. So we all rushed to his house. But Trotman was there. And it was the year after he'd broken his neck playing football at Wembley in the cup final. And he took us to Germany. I sat next to him on the coach from the airport to the hotel, smashing fella.

Speaker 1

And we went to Stuttgart, Essen and Bochum.

Speaker 4

Bert Troutman kicks off in a game he can't be invited to join, or it's a ladies-only event.

Speaker 1

Well, we were a little bit still thinking about the war, you know. So when we went to Germany, we had Germany as our deadly enemies, and we did not want to lose against them.

Speaker 4

In the dark shirts England, in the white shirts West Germany. can afford to laugh, he's on both sides. So when England equalise, one man's happy at least, not to mention 11 women.

Speaker 1

They were not a walk over by any means.

Speaker 4

A German counterattack is warded off, but the home team are determined to restore their lead and try again. It's no use, the Germans can't find the net and the game ends with draw.

Speaker 1

We're a bit disgruntled because we didn't want to draw, but at least We hadn't lost. So all we could do is say, Mr. Ashley, when's the next one? Not many weeks later, Bert Trotman rang again and said, Look, 11 players, two reserves, you're going to Berlin, you're playing in an international European competition. Can you do it? Mr. Ashley said, Of course I can. So he's ringing everybody round. Can you get time off? We're off to Germany, to Berlin, and we're going to play in this competition. Well, of course we all went. We didn't care whether we got time off or not. We'd just leave the job.

Speaker 5

It was a tournament on. There was two or three German teams and two or three Dutch teams and us. It was classed as the European Cup, and we were classed as representing England.

Speaker 1

We were representing our country. We felt extremely proud of that fact.

Speaker 5

Well, the build-up to the match, I mean, he had us there nearly every night with his blackboard and he said, Luke, you're representing your country. And as well as the Corinthian ladies, we felt like we were representing England because, well, I suppose we were. And we had the badge on the shirt.

Speaker 1

So we toddled off to Germany. We played against various countries and we won every game and we finished up in the final against Germany.

Speaker 5

Which was played in the Berlin Stadium in front of a huge crowd. There was a British garrison there at the time. There was 1000 soldiers there watching.

Speaker 1

Our desire to win all stemmed from Mr Ashley. He was a winner. He couldn't be a loser. and he's down there and say, all I want you to do is attack, attack, attack and frighten the opposition to death.

Speaker 5

I was so nervous. But as the game got going, you lose all your nerves and just get on with it.

Speaker 1

Anne Barnes was the first team goalkeeper and she played in the final, not me.

Speaker 5

I clobbered that ball, one of the Germans, from about two yards away, and it cracked me right on the head. And people say you see stars. Well, you certainly do. But I just got back up and got on with it. I'd have had to have had one of my legs chopped off before I'd have gone off.

Speaker 1

Once we'd got a couple of goals past them, we knew we'd got them beat.

Speaker 5

I don't remember who scored the goals. I just remember the feeling when I saw the goals going in. Well, absolutely brilliant. And you think, yes.

Speaker 1

There wasn't going to be any nerve-wracking. We just kept them out. And all Percy kept doing was running up and down the line saying, keep them out, keep them out, and you've won it.

Speaker 5

And when the final whistle blew, we'd beat them. We all just rushed up to each other and congratulated each other. The soldiers were singing Land of Hope and Gloria. Doris was the captain so when she lifted that trophy we all went a bit mad.

Speaker 1

And I can remember winning this trophy and all the crowd were leaving because they didn't like it that we'd beaten their German team. And we did it for the country but we did it for Percy because he was so... overawed with it all and he really, for the first time, I don't think he could believe what we'd done.

Speaker 5

We did feel like real champions because we were. We were the champions. This is the badge that we wore in our shirts when we played against Germany in the final of the European Cup. And if you notice, we have it on the heart side. We put it on the heart side because it meant that much to us. She'll be signing autographs in a bit.

Speaker 4

Football is not suitable for the female form. one simply can't take it seriously, can't one?

Speaker 2

Most unfeminine. All those muscles in all the wrong places.

Speaker 4

Nothing is more unelegant than women footballers. How could anyone cherish a female soccer player?

Speaker 1

It was the biggest moment in the Corinthians' career when we won that European Cup representing England. Mr Ashley was really excited about the fact that it had made a news item. And so he took us all down to the cinema in our football kit and brought us all out on the stage. And the audience on that day were clapping and cheering. And we thought, well, we've done a wonderful thing. And these people in the audience are not protesting about us being girls playing football. It was just the FA. Our manager was also a white mouse breeder. I have to say that first. And when he received the European Cup, it was like an oversized egg cup and he wasn't very happy. And he announced on the microphone that four anonymous businessmen have put their money together to buy this beautiful rose bowl in honour of what we had achieved. And this gentleman came on with this beautiful rose bowl and presented it to Doris, the captain, his daughter. Well, if there would have been a stage there, I would have fell off it because engraved on this beautiful trophy was Championship Mouse 1957. So Percy had thought, I'd rather have one of those. than that fiddling little over-sized egg cup they're calling the European cup.

Speaker 6

I think that was a real pull, the fact that you would, there was a possibility of international travel. I think a lot of girls were a bit star-struck with that. You know, you're something, poor, blimey.

Speaker 2

That's the team to play. That's the team that goes all over the world.

Speaker 10

The first time I ever went abroad was with the Carinthian ladies to Madeira and Portugal. So I had to get the first passport. That's the first passport I ever had. This is me, a 17-year-old innocent girl before I started playing football. Can you believe it? People like me didn't go on aeroplanes. It was, you were telling everybody, and the girls said, where you've been able to afford to go on an airplane? I said, I'm going to play football in another country. And I said, yeah. I said, and I'll let you know about it when I come back. It was the first plane I'd ever been on. And I was scared stiff when we set off because it was just bouncing up and down the plane and everything before we took off. And then we landed in Madeira, where I've never seen so many crowds there waiting for people to watch a football match. It was absolutely fantastic, you know, all these people around us, cheerers and everything and that. You thought you was probably a film star or something like that, you know, walking down the street and they say, you played football, bring your autograph, you know. So yes, it was really, you felt really good about it.

Speaker 5

We were treated like royalty because the Queen had just been and the excitement was still there. We got made members of the country club and stayed in the best hotels.

Speaker 10

I mean, I'd never been in a hotel like that. I don't think I'd been in a hotel. and then you went to Portugal playing football in an international stadium where the England players played and the Portuguese players played. It was just out of this world. They were playing on proper grass. Come on, like our gardener at the front, in the lawn. You're a bit scared because there was that many people there, just hear this noise.

Speaker 1

I think the Corinthians, if you take it in ability and technique, they could be as good as any man's team to watch. They knew what they were doing, they played the right game. They were so wonderful with us and cheered us, asked us for autographs, surrounded us when we came off. Sometimes they had to have police escort us off the ground. It was so wonderful, you couldn't believe.

Speaker 10

Everything was so exciting that it was things that we'd never done before. I went away with my mum and dad, but I never went away with anybody else. So going about with girls of my own age and some a bit older, that itself was a thing that I'd never done before, because I wasn't one for knocking about with girls before. I'd always played football with boys, so it was a bit of an adventure for me.

Speaker 1

We had a great camaraderie, I think, both teams. And we all had the same outlook.

Speaker 10

We was in Estereal and we was in a complex.

Speaker 5

I think it had been an army barracks and it was brand new.

Speaker 10

And it had a flat roof. So what we used to do was we used to go up on top of it and sunbathe in the nude.

Speaker 5

I didn't know anything about that. And I'm sticking to it.

Speaker 10

One day was there and next minute we just saw this plane going across and we was all looking at it and the next minute it turned round and came round low and looking at us all. And then we went out the next night to have a drink and that and there's all these air force men in this pub with us. so we used to get into things like that.

Speaker 1

As A Corinthian, I felt thrilled to be part of a girls' team at last, thrilled to be part of the camaraderie.

Speaker 9

All the coach trips, obviously, to keep ourselves amused. We had one girl, Anne Grimes, which you all know about. We used to make all the... songs up and they were absolutely so funny. She made that many up about certain people. I can't tell you about some of them because it's not right to really bring that out.

Speaker 1

In my family, my father was a poet. He could rhyme things. And I discovered that I could do the same.

Speaker 9

Some were a bit rude.

Speaker 1

There was a song for the Corinthians, there was a song for the nomads, and there were various other songs that I can't really put on the television.

Speaker 9

Oh no, I can't say that in front of you. can't. No, the Corinthian Virgins. That one. The Corinthian Virgins went away to boo to boo. The Corinthian Virgins went away to boo. The Corinthian Virgins went away to South America to boo to buy.

Speaker 10

Wherever we went, we would always sing the songs.

Speaker 1

We're Corinthians from Manchester, football ladies from Manchester, blue and white for Corinthians.

Speaker 6

What a team.

Speaker 1

We'll beat anyone who we know.

Speaker 6

We play football. I can't forgot the words.

Speaker 1

We have the talent, our youngsters are garland.

Speaker 6

Corinthians from Manchester.

Speaker 1

There was no reason for people not to have women's football in England. No reason whatsoever. We were hoping that we would explain to the English FA we could play the game. Mr Ashley sent them letters. He made telephone calls. They never took any

notice of him. It was a constant struggle because if you think about it, the FA still didn't accept us at all and I think that did make us more determined to carry on. We went to South America because South American countries were football mad.

Speaker 6

South America was like, the football.

Speaker 7

We used to get the Manchester Evening News at home, and I saw this advert saying, Carinthian ladies looking for people to go to America, something like that. I said, hey, they want me. I said, I can go to America. I need a passport. Can you get me one? And they said, well, we can't afford that, love. It's 30, Bob. And a few days later, my dad says, me and you, I go into Manchester on Saturday, I said, Oh, what for? You'll see. So we get to this stall and he puts his hand in his pocket, bless him, fetches out his electric razor, not had it long. And he says to the guy, How much will you give me for this? And the guy looked, he said, 25 Bob. He said, Oh, it's not enough. He said, My daughter's got a chance to go to America playing football. The guy looked at me, women play football. So he said, go on, I'll give you 30 bobs. So he went and got me a passport.

Speaker 9

It was just like an exciting thing when you're 14, it was just a dream for me.

Speaker 4

Chuckles or cheers. What lies ahead for the 29 girls soccer ambassadors, all from the Lancashire area, who are going to the United States and South America? Will foreigners fed on fables of horsey, hefty, hulking, cartoon-style English women get a fair idea of Britain's sports girls from the footballing 29? There's.

Speaker 10

A big article in the paper about the Corinthians, should they go, shouldn't they go. Walter Winterbottom saying, let them go because they can be laughed at and things like that.

Speaker 4

Let's ask Walter Winterbottom, England's men's team manager. Well, one simply can't take it seriously, can one? The experts say that football is not a suitable game for women anyway, and they certainly can't look attractive playing it. Still, I'm sure their visit would cause quite a stir in South America, even if the spectators aren't exactly concentrating on the finer points of the game.

Speaker 6

There was no hint of feminism then in society.

Speaker 4

Nat Lofthouse, ex-England and Bolton centre forward, chuckled. Well, I've only seen ladies play it twice. I enjoyed it. I had a really good laugh. Play? Well, I wasn't actually keeping my eye on the ball.

Speaker 10

It makes you feel... really angry because just certain people would not allow you to go on a proper football pitch.

Speaker 1

We were put down, not recognised and laughed at. We always had the rebel girls spirit from beginning to end. We didn't care.

Speaker 5

Some of them had to pack the jobs in. They couldn't get them back. They had to leave.

Speaker 7

I said, the headmaster, I'm going to America for three weeks. He says, you're not going. So I went home and I said to my mother, headmaster says I can't go. Oh, he bloody did, did **? *** was up and off to the education offices. And they said, well, we think she'd learn more in those 3 weeks in America than she would in three weeks in the school. So she can go. I couldn't wait to get back to school to tell the headmaster. So that was it, flying on a plane. I mean, all the neighbours were agong.

Speaker 9

When we were at the airport, we were all waiting there, and this chap came up and he said, Oh, are you a swimming club? And it was Walter Winterbottom, and I think it was Stanley Rouse.

Speaker 1

And Percy in his Bolton accent said, we are not.

Speaker 9

We're a football team.

Speaker 1

I am taking to South America to play in proper grounds with proper crowds because people like you won't allow us to play on your grounds in England.

Speaker 9

Well, we don't really need you because we can go anywhere we want.

Speaker 1

And Sir Stanley shrunk. and didn't know what on earth to say and walked back to his seat with his tail between his legs.

Speaker 9

And I thought, well, yeah, that's one in the eye for you.

Speaker 1

I couldn't believe it. And I thought, well done you. And he supported and stuck up for us every time.

Speaker 7

And off we go for three weeks, which was three months, really, wasn't it? We went to New York, then we went from New York to South America hackers.

Speaker 9

We did Curacao, Aruba. Santa Marta.

Speaker 3

On that trip we did 29 flights.

Speaker 10

Jamaica and Trinidad. It was just out of this world.

Speaker 9

South America was 14 when I went. Didn't even know where about in the world it was. My name is Margaret Whitworth and I played Outside Right. We were flying to Venezuela. There was trouble with the plane. And all of a sudden, looking out the window, that engine's on fire there. Well, the next thing we knew, we weren't turning back.

Speaker 7

The first hotel we sat in South America in Caracas was called Humboldt Hotel. And he had to go up in a cable car.

Speaker 9

When you're going over a jungle, we weren't allowed to walk because obviously it's poisonous snakes and things like that.

Speaker 7

There was in this posh hotel, this little kid from Newton Heath in Manchester, enjoying all these luxuries, you know.

Speaker 3

I'm not very adventurous with food, so I tended to live on soup and bread and bananas.

Speaker 7

You know, it was a joy to be there. And playing football, obviously, was a joy.

Speaker 9

The crowds were unbelievable.

Speaker 7

Because there wasn't any football ladies football teams around, We had to have these two great things.

Speaker 9

The pictures and everything, obviously, were top class because they were big stadiums.

Speaker 7

The difference when we went abroad was just phenomenal, you know?

Speaker 3

There was a crowd, I think it was 65,000, and all of a sudden they all jumped over the barriers and started chasing onto the pitch.

Speaker 9

And they had all sort of police around the ground with the dogs. They all had rifles.

Speaker 3

So we all had to turn round and run like mad to the changing rooms.

Speaker 7

I loved everything about it. I got goosebumps when the crowd cheered, you know?

Speaker 9

Yeah, I mean, we did play for the Red Cross.

Speaker 7

We didn't get paid. All I was was for charity. What are you thinking? America, we made over 100,000 pounds for the American Red Cross. In 1960, that's a lot of money. It's a lot of money now, isn't it?

Speaker 9

Well, originally we should have been going to South America for six weeks. But because it was so successful, they asked us to stay on. So it ended up being three months.

Speaker 4

Manchester's little daughters of football are magnificent. That's what 10s of thousands of delighted South Americans are saying about the goal-getting girls of Manchester's all-women's soccer teams, the Corinthians and the Nomads. And they just won't let them come home. with the triumphant South American tour extended still further today.

Speaker 1

I think as 28 girls in South America, we were quite liberated. And we did get up to all sorts of things.

Speaker 10

And Grimes told you I've met the leader and I wasn't, she was the one.

Speaker 1

That Marlene took us into a bar because she'd met this man who was a bikini salesman. And we spent all afternoon trying bikinis on and drinking Rum and Coke.

Speaker 10

I was a Sunday school teacher before I started playing football.

Speaker 1

And we had yet another game to play the next day.

Speaker 10

She blamed everything on me.

Speaker 9

You know, we did a lot of things the manager didn't know about. Look.

Speaker 1

There's A limbo party at midnight on the beach. Whoever wants to come, pillows in the bed, make it look as though you're asleep, and we'll see you over the gate at midnight.

Speaker 9

And we had to climb over the gates because we were all shut.

Speaker 7

They were very, very high, but we all managed to get over it.

Speaker 1

So I got to the top and it was all spiked, and my tight dog-tooth skirt got caught. In one of the spikes and ripped all the way up the seam. But it was a lot easier doing my limbo dancing with that skirt ripped a bit. And I don't think Mr Ashley knew a lot about it, but we felt quite free, quite happy to more or less do what we wanted.

Speaker 3

And I got friend Louis, this young lad. He had this record played for me on the local radio, Pretty Blue Eyes it was, even though I've not got blue eyes, but that was quite funny.

Speaker 9

I think it was Bogatar, and he sent this knock on the door. Miss Whitworth, there's telegram here for you, so I said, telegram? So I opened it up and it was this lad called Oliver, and he says, I love you more every minute of my existence. Love Oliver. And I thought, flipping hell's Oliver. What can you do when you're 14? You just laugh, don't you?

Speaker 1

We had a tremendous time. But believe you me, Mr Ashley had us training as much as possible almost every morning. And when we were on that pitch, we played as hard as we could.

Speaker 9

The matches that stick out for me was basically in Venezuela and Caracas.

Speaker 1

We were there with dozens of other football teams.

Speaker 9

We played two teams from Costa Rica, which was like a mini tournament.

Speaker 7

Somebody said to us, Have you seen the crowd? You were in the dressing room. I said, No, they said, It's masks, it's packed out. And I thought they were kidding and I started like, Oh yes, and the berets, berets packed out. And as we're walking out, I can hear the

roar, you know what I mean? People cheering and clapping. And I thought, my God. I mean, I've never played in front of that many people. Gladiators. That's what I felt. We were gladiators.

Speaker 9

I was very, very nervous, but obviously we stuck together.

Speaker 7

We all had the same. thing in our heads, we've got to win this match.

Speaker 9

Cuff Street were a very tough team to play. I mean, yeah, I was terrified.

Speaker 7

I think they were the first team that gave us any fright, you know. It was a battle with them, and I thought, we're going to get BT.

Speaker 9

It was quite frightening for me because I was only small.

Speaker 7

If you can't stop them, drop them.

Speaker 9

It was quite tough. We were used to winning, don't forget. We were very rarely beaten. In the end.

Speaker 1

It was the Quintons versus Nomads in the final, so to be perfectly honest, we didn't care which team won because we know we were taking that cup back to Manchester with us.

Speaker 4

England is back on the soccer map with an outright victory in the World Cup for women. And the two teams that swept into first and 2nd place in sun-baked Caracas, South America, are from Manchester. The Corinthians and the Nomads. Two wins against Odeka and Independente gave them the unofficial World Cup.

Speaker 7

I loved it. I loved the attention. I loved winning. It was just great for me.

Speaker 9

We went there to play football and that's what we were doing, enjoying it. I think that's one of the things that really put the Corinthians on top.

Speaker 7

I was 14 when I went to America, and I was... I'd left school when I came back. When I knocked at the front door, my mother answered obviously to teach. She went, Are you pregnant? I was crying because she thought I was pregnant. Strange thing to ask, isn't it? I said, I get pregnant.

Speaker 9

When we came back from South America, terrible. Couldn't settle, couldn't stay in the house, because we'd been used to being out in the open all the time and in massive hotels, and you come home and you're in a little terrace house. And oh no, couldn't stay in, it was terrible.

Speaker 3

I was depressed then. You're always missing being with all the girls.

Speaker 10

Norman, he played for Hyde United. Oh, as soon as he knew I played football, that was it. He came across it. I think he was hoping to come across and have a laugh at me, you know, but once he saw how the team was playing, you know, he said, oh, blimey, you've got a good team, haven't you? And that was it. So he came and watched us every week. While I was courting, we went to South America for three months, so we were writing letters and more or less to say, I still want to go out with you when I come back, but if not, you can, go with somebody else. So I didn't know what the situation was until I got home, whether he still was with me or whether he was anybody else. When I got married, it was in the local reporter, June footballers getting married, yes. It was the first time my dad said he'd ever seen me in a dress like that, you know. First time I'd seen her as a lady.

Speaker 11

Yeah.

Speaker 7

There was an article in the paper about us being there in America and I thought, we're getting some recognition at last.

Speaker 1

Coming back from various trips and having no publicity, we did find that we had a lot more after South America and that maybe the FA would at last listen to us and agree

that we should be able to play on their grounds. We did realise that we were rebellious against the system.

Speaker 6

There was an article and it said, ladies football team return from South America, something, you know, real. I said, I looked at this, I said, God, that's amazing. I'm thinking South America, I thought, oh, perhaps they go in there all the time, you know. every fortnight. My style was just to get the ball and get it up there as quick as you can and that. I think that was all Eddie. I had never played a game. It wasn't the game I played, it was kicking about with the lads. He said, show me what you can do. Then after, I don't know, it's probably 1/4 of an hour. He said, yeah, you'll do. You see a ball, you want to kick it. You don't want to bounce it or throw it up or play 2 balls. No, you kick it. Kicking is the thing. Being A Corinthian gave you that opening up where you could There were these possibilities. My sort of future would have been such that I'd have probably been working as a hairdresser or something, married the lad up the street, had a few kids, had not gone very far. I was about 15 when we went to Italy. It was like a culture shock, the whole thing, everything we did. And there was pizza sellers and they were like thin, thin pizzas. And I'd never had pizza. They were so fantastic. The smell of them was like, you know, you think, God, these are lovely. That was the equivalent we had was meat and potato pie, you know?

Speaker 9

When we went to Italy, there was no other women's teams around to play, so we ended up actually playing exhibition matches between ourselves, Crintons and Nomads, and played on Juventus ground.

Speaker 6

I mean, I played at Fog Lane, that was it. And here we are, we're on the Juventus pitch. All the, because then, on the continent, they had big railings all the way around the ground. And what they'd do, they were usually guys, young guys, flinging flowers over the top onto the pitch. You'd be running up and down, all these flowers coming at you. And then when we went out of the stadium, this swarm of scooters with these young lads on All round, buzzing round all the bikes, shouting out and, you know, Bella, Bella! It was like being in a film set, really.

Speaker 7

I got this boyfriend, he was really nice. and he used to come and meet me and we'd go on the beach together.

Speaker 6

When we were in Milan, we also played on, I think it was AC Milan's ground. The hotel was facing a jeweller's shop. There was a young guy there and I was up on my balcony one day. We had balconies as well, it was like Romeo and Juliet. He was on the other side on his balcony over the shop. And he threw me over a gold cross and chain. it's like a dream, isn't it? I'd come from Oldham.

Speaker 7

And while I'm at home, I get this letter, and it's from him, Giuseppe. He said, can I come to England to marry you? And my mother went, the bloody hell's he on about? Can he come on over and marry you? Tell him to sod up, he said. Bloody marrying you.

Speaker 6

I think being in the Corinthians was a total education. It lifted you to, well, heights you'd never be in.

Speaker 11

My name is Jean Wilson and I played outside left, left wing in other words. I joined in 1963 when I was 14. I used to get the ball and run down the left wing.

Speaker 2

My name's Jan Lyons. I played right fullback #2, attacking right fullback. I played really, really well. I was quite a bit better than the lads, you know. I really got interested when the World Cup was in England in 1966.

Speaker 8

Yeah, it was the swinging 60s, but there wasn't a great swing to women becoming prominent in sport. When I first got to Fog Lane I thought this is absolutely brilliant. I'm actually allowed to play football with other women.

Speaker 2

They didn't accept anybody. You do have to be able to have a little bit of natural ability about you. Move to the side, go that way, trick them, go backwards, look that way, look that way, curving it with your left foot, your right foot.

Speaker 8

Teams were getting better and giving you a good run for your money.

Speaker 2

You know, there was women playing everywhere, it was tremendous.

Speaker 3

So we used to play in the summer. follow over the country.

Speaker 11

One of my first matches was in October 1963. We played Five Ladies. I think they were called Five Dynamites, actually. We won about 17-nil. I scored five goals. We, Jean, wraps the mighty Scots.

Speaker 5

We played a team in Ireland and we won, I think, 20-nil. Everybody on the team scored.

Speaker 11

When we played, we won most of the times. There was, we must say, there was a couple of quite good teams about that occasionally, very occasionally, they might have beat us, but it didn't happen very often.

Speaker 7

I think the Corinthian ladies were eventually very well known because they were good. That was the reason. Percy Ashley got together his first team, the Corinthians, 15 years ago. The second team, the Nomads, was formed in 1957. And since then, these footballing ladies have travelled the world, giving exhibition matches and competing against foreign teams. So far, they've raised over 200,000 pounds for charity, and they've won 52 trophies.

Speaker 2

Everywhere we went, we had a right crowd of South American boys training us around the town. We had to lose them, just a crowd, really.

Speaker 6

In fact, there were more men than women, but they just used to come and say.

Speaker 2

Look, there are the Corinthians.

Speaker 7

They're all here to play football.

Speaker 1

What do your boyfriends think of you playing football?

Speaker 6

What's that got to do with you?

Speaker 7

People who used to go and watch them and tell other people to say, they're bloody good, you know, they never get beat.

Speaker 2

But don't forget, everybody wanted to beat the Corinthians. We was champions of the world at one point, so you did have to uphold your reputation. And it wasn't just your reputation, it was fact. We was the best.

Speaker 7

Through Percy, Ashley, we felt we were trying to get some recognition to play on proper grounds, you know?

Speaker 6

I respected him so much because he seemed to be able to do anything from my point of view.

Speaker 9

Well, Percy was there, no one could touch the Corinthians. he would fight anybody to keep that club where it was.

Speaker 1

And he ran that team better than anybody ever could. We felt he was going to be there for us forever.

Speaker 7

I look after them and the girls all know that they've got to obey the discipline which I lay down.

Speaker 9

I mean, it got like 67 and we knew at some point he wasn't very well. You know, we knew he was fading.

Speaker 4

We now record with regret that Mr Ashley died at his home on October the 15th.

Speaker 9

It was just like a disaster because you think you'll never get anyone like him again and he was just a run-off. I mean one thing with him, I got a letter off him after playing a game in Scotland. It was tough and they kicked me to death and It was, I nearly cried when I read it. I mean, I've still got it now. And he thanked everybody. He sent everybody

a letter and he thanked everybody for playing and giving 100%. And that meant a lot to me, you know, and you read things like that. But that's the way he was. Never, ever be the same again. He never got that sort of feeling of excitement, turning up at his house and everything like that.

Speaker 6

Had they not been him, we wouldn't have had a Corinthians. They wouldn't have been nothing. They wouldn't have been there. They wouldn't have been the foundation. And he always, always fought for his teams, these girls.

Speaker 1

He and his daughter ran that club together and she absolutely devoted her life to the game. When Percy died, she didn't want to take any further part in the team.

Speaker 9

And yeah, everybody was devastated. Yeah.

Speaker 11

When Percy died, it was very hard because... Most of the ladies and girls wanted to play football and obviously he had died.

Speaker 9

The enthusiasm of the girls obviously kept the team going.

Speaker 2

So it didn't stop us because we wanted to play and we was playing.

Speaker 8

So as long as we had a football field and we were playing on it, that's all that mattered to us.

Speaker 2

It was the end of an era but the beginning of a new one.

Speaker 4

Those winning girls of Manchester's Corinthian Ladies Football Club are managing their own affairs these days with the help of mother of two Mrs Gladys Akin, who organises the club's fixtures and does its bookkeeping and correspondence. Mrs Akin, the club's welfare officer and mother of 18-year-old goalkeeper Carol, travels with the players by coach to matches all over the country. Now the two teams' captains pick their own sides for the charity matches they give at home and abroad.

Speaker 8

You've got to play together, you've got to work together to be a team. And that's what those girls did.

Speaker 11

I think because they loved playing football so much.

Speaker 8

We played football and nobody was going to tell us we couldn't play football.

Speaker 11

There was a lot more talk about ladies football and what could happen?

Speaker 1

It wasn't until the early 70s that the FA responded to women playing football an absolute disgrace.

Speaker 4

After nearly 50 years, the Football Association took a new look at women playing soccer yesterday. Even the vision of a Ladies Cup final at Wembley came a little nearer. Mrs Gladys Aiken, manager of Manchester Corinthians, Britain's top women's team, said, We play on Sundays at Fog Lane Park, Didsbury, where there are no facilities and the girls have to wash from a bucket of cold water. I'm not fussy about Wembley, Old Trafford or Main Road. All we ask is a ground with reasonable facilities.

Speaker 2

Because I was 12, 13, 14 when I was playing, I didn't realise. how bad it was what they'd done to us. I didn't realise that till later on. And now I know it was absolutely disgraceful what they did to us to stop us playing.

Speaker 11

It was a battle, but things were changing.

Speaker 2

And I think they realised, even though they might not have wanted to, I think it was forced to a fashion to involve women in the teams.

Speaker 4

Women's football is a growing sport and the FA cannot continue to ostracise it.

Speaker 2

If the FA now turns round and accepts our affiliation, it'll be a great day for football.

Speaker 4

It's A gimmick really, with all this talk about equal pay and so on. There's no equality in soccer.

Speaker 2

It's no use saying football's too rough for women or that it's undignified. If we like it, we should have full freedom to play it.

Speaker 4

Let's hope that the women keep on rushing home for the dinner and that it doesn't become the men doing the cooking and the women playing the football.

Speaker 2

Glad it's Akin, he said, Right, we've been invited to an international tournament, so I remember them saying, Would you like to come to Reims? Would I like to?

Speaker 8

Yes, I was over the moon. The experience of playing against two French teams and Juventus. You're going up a notch. This was my first big chance at the big time.

Speaker 2

I just remember going to Manchester Airport and the evening news actually came and took pictures of us all. I remember the air hostess shouting at us to behave and get on the plane. There's four teams played in the tournament, ourselves, Juventus, Reims and A-team from Czechoslovakia.

Speaker 9

And it was like a knockout competition.

Speaker 2

I think the draw was picked and we played State de Reims at Ritton Stadium and we beat them only just, I think it was 5-3. And Juventus beat the Czech team. And then John, the trainer, said, now you're playing Juventus in the final.

Speaker 9

Juventus will, yeah, quite a rough side, tough, just like, defensive, a little bit sort of nasty sometimes.

Speaker 2

And Margaret Wild and. Pauline said, we are going to win it. We're going to win this tournament. We're from England and we're going to win and we're going to show these people this is what we do. I'll never forget the words actually, that's what she said. We're going to win it. And it has belief, you've got to believe. You have to.

Speaker 8

The Corinthians have such fantastic history, fantastic and some legendary players.

Speaker 7

The Corinthian style You'd go out and you'd play to the best of your ability.

Speaker 1

We were world beaters and we were world beaters.

Speaker 10

One of the best teams in the world.

Speaker 1

You are not going to lose. And that was the way we all were. We were confident.

Speaker 11

We were the champions, even in the early days.

Speaker 8

The girls of 1970 did just as well and we all lined up. I thought, this is it, this is it.

Speaker 2

This is professionalism, So we was all waiting, Christians on one side, Juventus on the other. Not allowed to speak to each other, he just was focused, that's what he said. Keep focused.

Speaker 8

What you were classed as a European game. So you was representing England?

Speaker 2

And you turned around and there was a massive main stand there full of obviously supporters.

Speaker 8

They started playing the national anthems. Wow, tears were running down my eyes because I felt so emotional.

Speaker 2

And the captain of the team, Pauline Quayle, said, sing the national anthem and sing it loud and proud.

Speaker 8

And I remember Pat, the twins, saying, right, you're playing for your country now, girls.

Speaker 2

It didn't matter that it was Juventus. We was England against Italy, and that's what happened. And we had to beat them. We had to beat them. And then, you know, get to the game, get it started. But I remember they was defending quite... Well, the Italians did defend quite well. We was more attacking.

Speaker 8

I remember going to the wing once, chasing this forward, and... I thought she's going to get the better of me for speed and I just saw my opportunity and I flew myself at her and did a fantastic sliding tackle.

Speaker 9

It was a very hard game and you had to be on your toes all the time because they were a good side. it was just a typical England versus Italy match.

Speaker 2

So half-time coming, it was nil-nil.

Speaker 8

It started raining. And all I could hear from the Italians were, typical English weather, rain. And I thought, who cares? We're going to win this. So obviously, I had a job to do, keeping them out. But the forwards had a job to do scoring.

Speaker 2

The ball went down the wing, come across.

Speaker 9

Hit the bar, come out.

Speaker 2

And Linda Hallam scored the goal.

Speaker 9

She was there, she just nodded it in.

Speaker 2

So we all went mad when she scored the goal, you know. And then we had to hang on for the last 10 minutes, because obviously they needed to score. I got cramped really bad. I had to go off on the sidelines, somebody else took my place, and I was like that up and down, because obviously he was going for goal, and the goalkeeper, Chris Miller, was saving it, diving in the mud, and then she kicked it out and the ref blew the whistle.

Speaker 8

That was it, uproar, jumping for joy.

Speaker 2

And I ran on the pitch limping, because I'd still got my cramp going on. It was an amazing feeling.

Speaker 8

One nil, that's all we needed.

Speaker 2

It was the best moment ever in my life. And having seen England lift the World Cup in '66 and us lifting that trophy, European trophy, was equal for me. It was fantastic.

Speaker 8

The celebrations after was phenomenal, absolutely brilliant. We had champagne the lot, massive cup. It was a lovely cup. It's a moment in my life that I'll never, ever forget.

Speaker 11

In the end, after so many years, the ban was lifted and the Corinthians survived. And football in general for ladies went on and on and on.

Speaker 8

To think we started in 49 and we were there when the FA unloaded us in, it's quite an achievement.

Speaker 1

It was a David and Goliath battle, but in the end we won.

Speaker 7

As a team of Corinthians, we just went and did a job. We played, and we played good, and we didn't care about the FA.

Speaker 8

We conquered the UK. We conquered Europe. We conquered South America. So, obviously, the Corinthians were the best team.

Speaker 2

You're not stopping us. You think you are, but you're not.

Speaker 6

You were playing football, and you could either do it, and it didn't matter whether you were a man, woman, or whoever you were, you're a footballer. And you happen to be a woman.

Speaker 2

The Corinthians made it. Women's football has made it. It's always been a battle. And look where we are now.

Speaker 6

You always have to knock at the door of everything, be it football, whatever.

Speaker 2

Because we wanted to play, and we did play with passion, and we played with pride. And we did it. We did it. I just said it's polite That women can play sports We can kick a ball with some force Now stop it with your insults When we play we get good results We're forces to be reckoned with No, no play, it's just a bit We can blast a ball in the back of the bet Now stop it with this mindset Gals, let's get back to the game