

Dear Author,

Thank you for the opportunity to edit this engaging and well-researched manuscript. Your passion for the subject matter shows on every page, and your voice is energetic and accessible. The ‘dust-dry’ QSAC track or ‘late-afternoon spring war’ of Penrith are the kind of vivid sensory details that work to turn statistics into a story.

I understand your central argument to be that widespread public interest in women's football is not new. You show that the interest has repeatedly surfaced whenever the game has been given sufficient exposure, promotion and opportunity; in 1920s England as much as in contemporary Spain, Australia, or Italy. I found ‘female football doesn't need the hard sell; it only needs attention’ an especially effective articulation of this idea. I would consider foregrounding this proposition, or something close to it, earlier, so readers have a clearer lens through which to interpret the historical examples and attendance figures that follow.

The intended audience appears to be general Australian readers with an interest in sport and social history, rather than football specialists or researching academics. This is signalled in part by the conversational prose and the lack of intext citations. The piece does not appear to expect any football or sporting expertise in that you’ve stayed away from complex terminology, and provided explanatory gloss for key terms, such as ‘the Gabba’ and the Matildas. My edits have kept this audience in mind.

The clearest opportunity for improvement is in the manuscript’s structure and flow, particularly in making the progression of the argument easier to follow. The piece currently moves a great deal between the late 2010s and early 2020s, and through the 1910s and 1920. There's real advantage in this non-linear approach, particularly given your argument is grounded in the idea that wherever and whenever you look, the interest for women’s football has existed. However, the frequency of these shifts in time and place sometimes makes it difficult to track the evidence and the argument about progress made and progress still to be made. Take the paragraph on the Atlético Madrid, Fiorentina/Juventus, FA Cup and Liga MX crowds. This moves from March 2019, to January 2019, to ‘a week later’, to ‘12 months before’. The figures are compelling, but the sequencing weakens their cumulative effect.

I therefore suggest consolidating the material into a clearer chronology where possible and using stronger transitions when the manuscript deliberately jumps in time. The 2014 to 2017 Matildas opening works well as a contemporary hook. From there, the international examples could establish the present-day scale of interest before the manuscript pivots more explicitly to the historical evidence as proof that “this is not new”. Once you move into the historical material, I would stay there long enough for the chronology to build, rather than jumping forward and then back again. Further, within

those historical sections, moving consistently forwards or backwards through time would make the argument easier to follow.

I also recommend keeping key facts about any given match close to the introduction of that match, so the reader doesn't need to search backwards to understand the manuscript. For instance, the Atlético-Barcelona match currently resurfaces several paragraphs after it is first introduced – among the large volume of matches brought up, it's hard to remember which is which out of context.

To capitalise on the strength of the research, ensure the presentation of numerical evidence is consistently specific or consistently rounded. A combination of the two approaches diminishes the impact of either. The Suncorp Stadium paragraph is a good example: the 2019 crowd is given precisely as 10,580, while the 1921 figure it is compared against is rounded to 10,000. If 1921 is the benchmark being beaten, saying so precisely would land the comparison more clearly. Conversely, claiming a record broken without providing sufficient proof risks undermining the confidence and credibility of your writing. Given how often the manuscript compares attendance figures, I would favour specificity and apply it consistently.

The manuscript would also benefit generally from more consistency of terminology. For instance, use 'women's football' throughout, as opposed to 'female football' or any other terms. The same principle applies to team names, leagues and competitions. Once a term or naming convention is established, using it consistently will make the piece easier to follow.

At the copy edit level, I have made light corrections to grammar and punctuation, though I've left deliberately conversational or expressive language intact unless it creates ambiguity. Given the manuscript's Australian readership, I have also aligned your work with the Australian Government Style Manual and would encourage you to use it as a reference as the manuscript develops. In particular, use Australian spelling, capitalise proper nouns consistently, introduce and use abbreviations appropriately, and present large numbers with comma separators. For example, forms such as '48 212', '10 580' and '10 000' should become 48,212, 10,580 and 10,000.

Overall, this is a promising manuscript, and I am interested to read more. I would be very happy to discuss any of these edits with you further. Please reach out if you would like to chat.

Best of luck, and best regards,

Editor