



Girlguiding
Ulster



Women's Irish FA Football Challenge Resource





About the Partnership

Including a special message from Marissa Callaghan former NI Captain.



Information for Leaders

Activities have been divided into 4 parts. All activities are suitable for all sections.



Part 1: Get Creative

Choose at least 1 creative activity to express yourself and support players.



Part 2: Understanding the Game

Learn some football skills to help master the game. Test your skills and choose 3 skills to learn.



Part 3: Healthy Body

Get healthy, get cooking. Try some healthy options for breakfast, lunch & dinner spending at least 30 minutes on the activity.



Part 4: Good Team Player

Mental health is a vital part of football. Choose at least 1 activity.



Take it Further

Get in touch with your local club who can help you take your football journey further.



Just for Fun Answers



FAQ





About the Partnership

A special message from Marissa Callaghan

We are proud to introduce a groundbreaking partnership between the Irish FA Foundation and Girlguiding Ulster, two organisations united by a shared commitment to empowering girls and young women across Northern Ireland.

This collaboration marks an exciting step forward in creating inclusive, engaging and inspiring opportunities for girls to experience the joy of football while developing valuable life skills. Through the Football Badge Programme, joint events, and leadership development initiatives, we aim to spark a lifelong love for sport, build confidence, and foster community spirit.

With over 7,000 members across 500 units, Girlguiding Ulster offers a powerful platform to reach young girls at every stage of their journey. By combining the Irish FA's expertise in grassroots football with Girlguiding's dedication to personal growth and leadership, we are laying the foundation for a programme that is fun, accessible and impactful. Whether you're a leader delivering the resource or a young girl lacing up your boots for the first time, we hope this booklet inspires you to get involved, try something new and discover the power of football to bring people together.

Let's kick off this journey... together.

Marissa Callaghan

Women's Football Development Officer



Meet Sweet Caroline - IFA Mascot

Eadie Fallis entered a competition to design a mascot for the Northern Ireland senior women's team, along with her classmates at Jones Memorial Primary School in Enniskillen, back in April 2016.

Her design was selected from more than 3,500 entries from boys and girls in primary schools across Northern Ireland.

The young Fermanagh girl wanted her design to be a symbol of Northern Ireland football and the addition of the colour pink added a splash of girl power. "The superhero concept is to remind us that female footballers can be superstars, too," she said.





About the activities

We have divided the activities into 4 parts:

1. Get Creative (choose at least 1 activity, times vary)
2. Understand the Game/Football skills (at least 20 minutes) choose what suits your unit.
3. Healthy Body (at least 30 minutes)
4. Good Team Player choose at least 1 activity.
5. Take it further - Meet a club. This is not essential to achieve the badge but will be lots of fun!

All activities are appropriate for all sections, and many require minimal resources. You will need enough space for your unit to move safely around for activities in part 2.

Find... Meet a club - take it further. This is not essential to achieve the badge but will be lots of fun!

See the FAQs on page 23 for more information.

How to order your badges

Please complete the Evaluation form which will enable you to order your badges.

Badges are free for GGU members, £1 for non-GGU members, and p&p is £3 for both.

Click on the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/football-challenge>

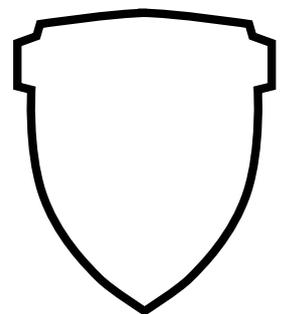
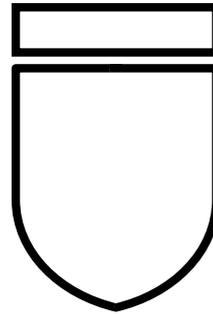
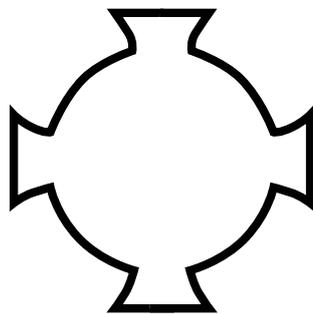
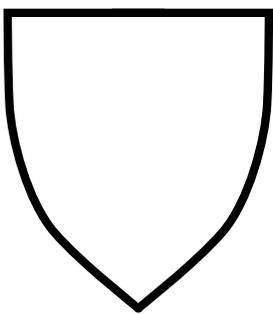


**Design your own team kit.**

Now it is time to get creative. Design a football kit to represent your own team. What colours will it be? What symbols, mascots or patterns represent you? Take it further by voting for your favourite design.

Create your team crest.

Here are the crests from the four home Nations football teams. Can you tell which shape belongs to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales?



Now create your own crest and you can make it any shape you want.

Design a banner.

Get some large pieces of card or cardboard. Then use felt-tip pens, colouring pencils or even paint to create a "Love Football" banner with words of encouragement. Take it further by bringing your banner to a live football game and support the Northern Ireland senior women's football team.

Design a mascot.

You will have seen the Irish FA mascot called Sweet Caroline (she is on the badge!). Now it's time for you to create your own mascot. What is their name and what super skills do they have?





Team Name:

Away Kit:



Home Kit:



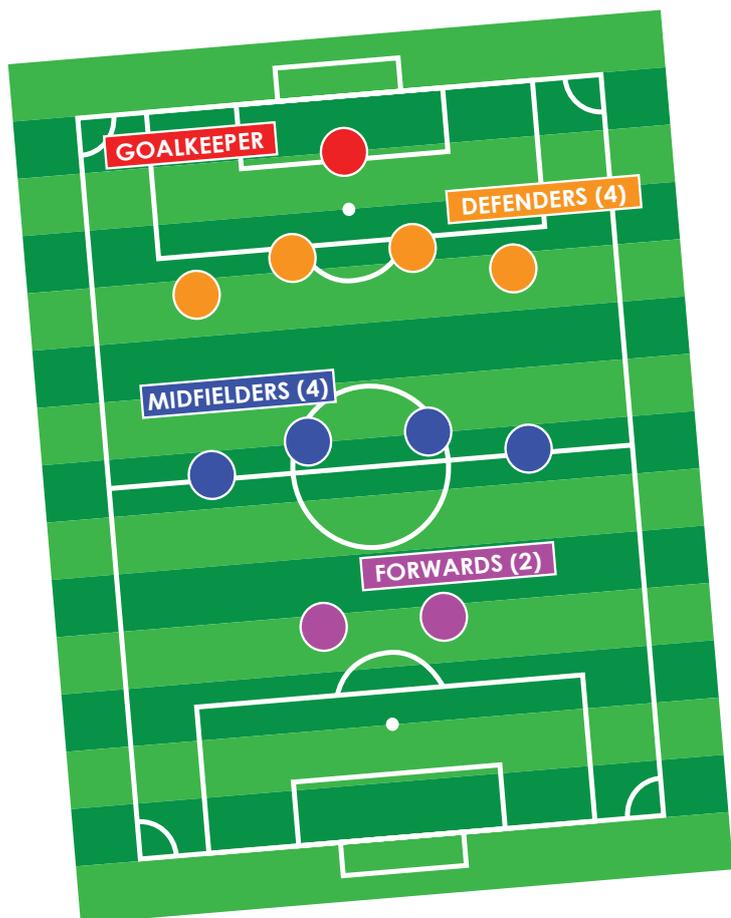
Goalkeeper Kit:





Understand the Game

In football (also known as soccer) the basic objective is for two teams of 11 players to score by getting the ball into the opposing team's goal. Players can use any part of their body except their hands and arms to move the ball, with the goalkeeper being the exception within their designated penalty area. A match is typically divided into two 45-minute halves, with the team scoring the most goals at the end winning.



Watch behind the scenes the story of a team that made history.

A New Dream - <https://youtu.be/3ANWR-eiaGE>



Biggest Win

🇲🇰 North Macedonia 0-11 Northern Ireland 🇬🇧
(Skopje, North Macedonia; 25th November 2021)





Throw & Control

Step 1: How high can you throw a ball?

Step 2: Throw it as high as you can - but be sure to catch it before it bounces.

Step 3: Can you do this standing on one leg?



*Use a
balloon to
slow things
down if you
find this tricky*

Balance The Ball

Step 1: See how long you can balance the ball on different parts of your body: your shoulder, your arm, your knee, your foot.

Step 2: Try to hold the ball for as long as you can on each part of your body. See who can hold the ball the longest.

Step 3: Can you find a way to move around while you balance the ball?



*Make sure
you choose a
safe place
to play*

Knee Tag

Step 1: Standing face-to-face with your friend, score a point every time you can tag the front of their knee.

Step 2: Try to tag your friend's knee, without giving them the chance to tag yours.

Step 3: Make the game harder by allowing tags on the back or side of the knee.



*Try to tag
without getting
tagged!*





Through The Gate

Step 1: Practice your passing skills with a partner by setting up a gate using two objects. Stand on the opposite side of the gate to your partner.

How many times can you pass the ball to each other through the gate?

Step 2: Can you use both feet to control and pass the ball accurately through the gate?

Step 3: To make it harder, make the gate smaller - or move further away from the gate.



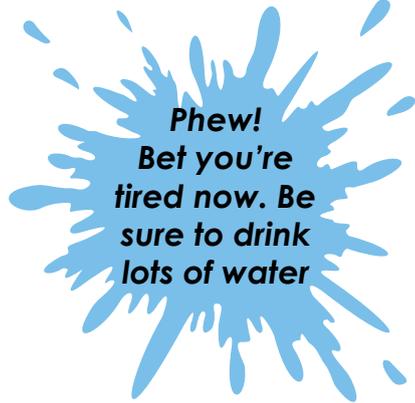
**Set a record
and try to
break it**

1v1 Scoring Zone

Step 1: Invite a friend to play. Set up a mini pitch with a scoring zone and a goal area at each side.

Step 2: To score a point, dribble the ball into the scoring zone, before trying to score a goal. You must be in the scoring zone to be able to score a goal.

Step 3: Try making the scoring zone narrow to make the game harder.



**Phew!
Bet you're
tired now. Be
sure to drink
lots of water**

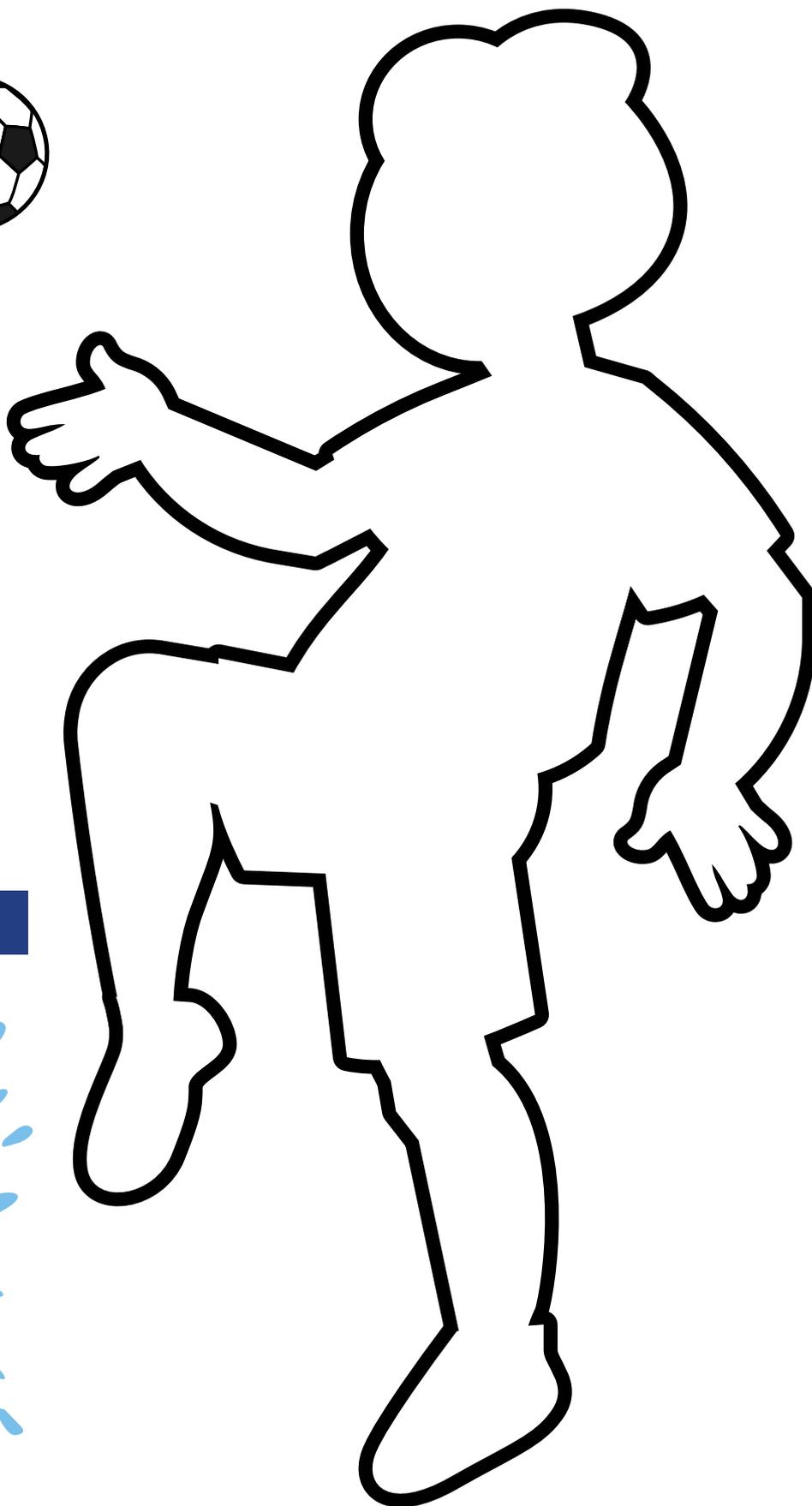
Keepy Up Challenge

Step 1: Try to keep the ball off the ground using as many touches as you can, letting it bounce once between touches.

Step 2: Keep trying to improve your score – how long can you keep the ball up?

Step 3: Use as many parts of your body as you can to keep the ball off the ground. Can you do it without letting the ball bounce?





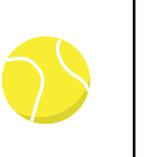
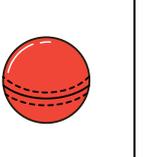
Keepy Up Challenge

How many parts of your body can you use? Mark them on the drawing.





How many of each ball can you see?

Football	Basketball	Volleyball	Beach ball	Rugby ball	Bowling ball	Tennis ball	Cricket ball
							





What is nutrition

Nutrition is the study of food and how it affects the health and growth of the body. Nutrients are substances found in foods that our bodies use to grow, reproduce and survive. Proteins are important for growth and development. They also help your body repair tissue, carry oxygen, digest foods, and regulate hormone.

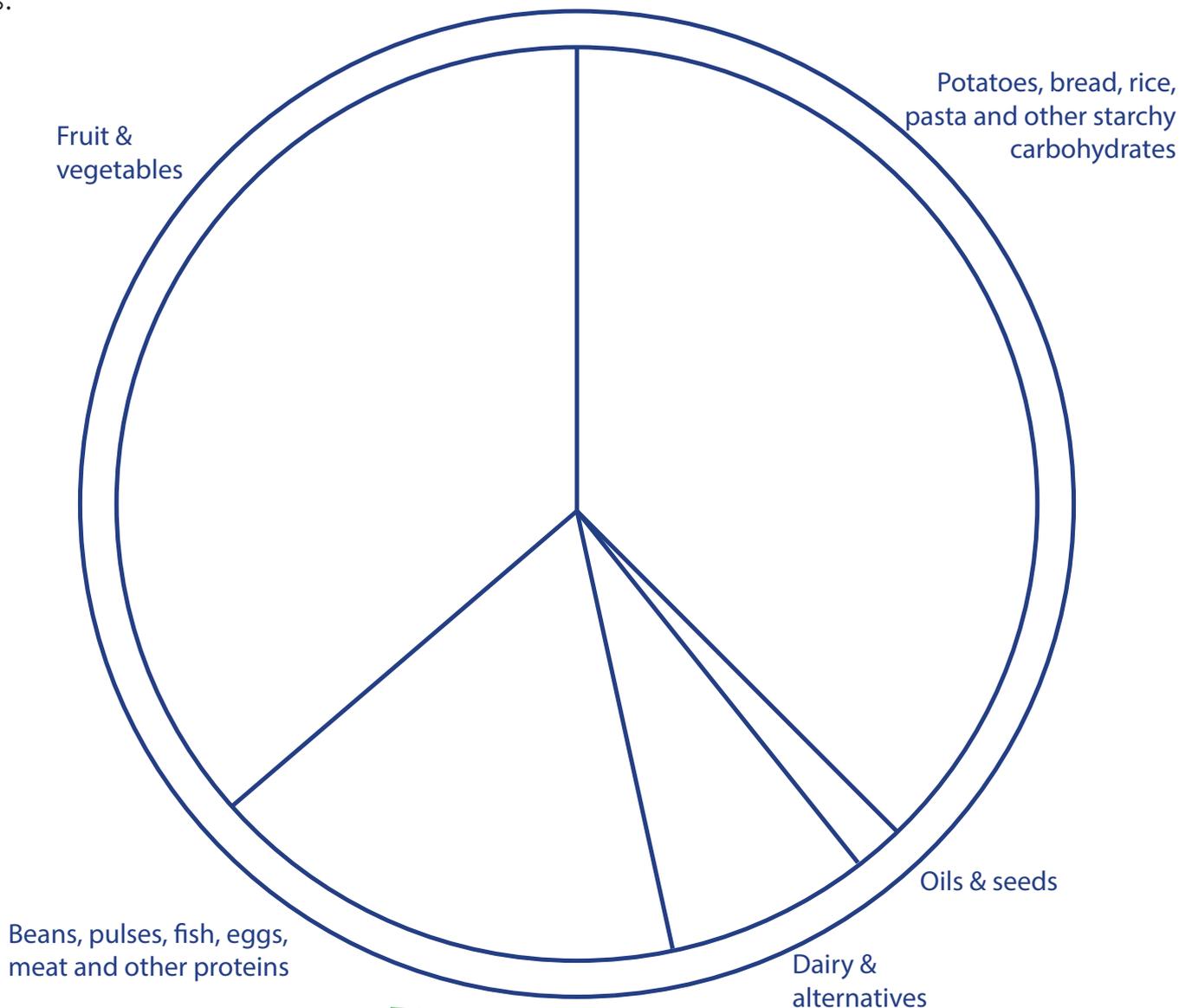
Nutrition and Healthy Eating

Healthy Eating for Footballers

Various foods can boost players' energy and recovery. At home or in your unit make a meal for yourself that is full of nutrition and tasty to eat.

Drawing Activity

Design your dream "football fuel" meal. Decide what is good to boost your energy, full of nutrition and tasty to eat. All you need is a paper plate and some colouring pencils or felt tips.





Boost your energy

Players use a lot of energy during a game of football. Think about different kinds of treats that you can grab in a hurry to boost energy from the sidelines. What kind of ingredients give healthy fuel for training? Examples include oats and fruit, which can be formed into energy balls, flapjacks and no-bake cookies. Choose one and make it in your unit. Be sure to check for any allergies.

Fruit Kebabs

Everyone loves a fruit kebab. Get the girls to choose from fruits they like and add a few that they have never tasted before. They could even try a caterpillar fruit kebab or let them use their imagination to come up with their own creation. You could have a fun football-themed presentation!



Spicy Roasted Chickpeas

(serves 3)

Ingredients:

- 1 can chickpeas rinsed and drained
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- 1 tsp rapeseed/sunflower oil

Method:

Empty chickpeas out of can and pat dry with kitchen roll.

Mix all ingredients in a bowl, then spread on baking tray.

Roast for 35-40 mins at 180 degrees C.

Provides: 105kcal; 12g carbohydrates of which sugar; 5g, 5.8g protein; 4.7g fat; 0.45g saturated fat.





Easy Energy Bolls

Before you begin be sure to check for any allergies.

Ingredients:

1 cup of rolled oats
 1/2 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
 1/2 cup ground flaxseed meal
 1/2 cup peanut butter
 1/3 cup honey
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1/4 tsp salt



Method:

Stir everything together in a bowl. Roll into 24 balls and put into fridge for approx 30 minutes. These can be kept in the freezer and defrosted when you need them.

Protein Smoothie

(serves 1)

High Protein Smoothie (great for post exercise snack, especially if your main meal is not going to be available within 1-2 hours)

Ingredients:

100g low fat yoghurt
 30g oats (or 1 sachet pre-packaged oats)
 100ml semi-skimmed milk
 30g/1 tbsp peanut butter
 Banana/berries/fruit of choice

Method:

Blend all ingredients together.



Nutrition Resource Pack

Click on the QR code for more healthy ideas.

Or check out the link for more ideas:

<https://www.uefa.com/takecare/>





Just for Fun! Maze Puzzle

Find your path through the maze to score a goal without being blocked by the players.

START

BLOCKED!

BLOCKED!

BLOCKED!

FINISH

GOAL!

15



Mindset for Football and Life: Remind the girls that it's ok to have sad days. Help them feel comfortable talking about it and putting their feelings into words. Focus on the positive. Girls need to feel comfortable, not defeated, when they make mistakes or fail. Leaders can give support and renew their motivation and hope. Everyone needs a break. Check in with the girls when they feel low. Remember the importance of mindfulness and rest.

One Week of Kindness



Monday: Say hello to someone in school or your unit you have never spoken to and ask them what their name is.

Tuesday: Ask someone who is sitting alone, or someone who is new to your school, to sit with you at lunch.

Wednesday: Do one small good deed (open the door for someone, pick up something they dropped, or help someone carry something)

Thursday: Say hello to someone you don't think you like very much. Find one thing to compliment them on.

Friday: Say "thank you" to someone for something they have done for you and be specific.

Saturday: Now it is time for you to be kind to yourself. Make a list of things that make you happy.

Sunday: Spend some time outdoors and get some fresh air. Enjoy the world around you.

Share what you have done with the rest of the unit and find out how different your acts of kindness are.

Do Something Nice



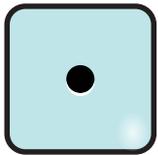
Task - Do Something Nice for a Teammate: Write a checklist of small things they could do, like a compliment or helping them practice a skill, encourage them when they try their best, support them with fitness and work together.



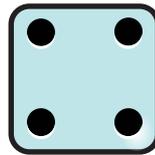


Game - Mindful Dice - Let's Chat

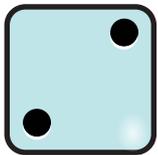
This can be played in one large group or small groups depending on the size of your unit. You will need a dice. Let's chat.



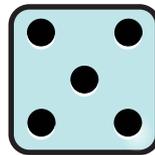
What has made you happy so far today?



Who is someone who makes you smile?



What is something you are looking forward to?



What is something nice that someone has done for you lately?



What do you like about yourself?



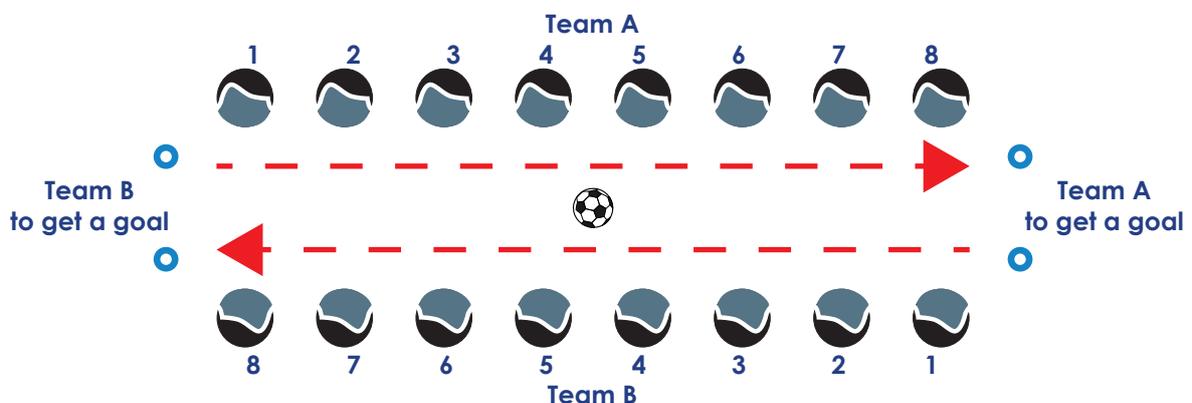
What is something nice that you have done for someone lately?

Game - 1 V 1



Equipment: A football and 4 cones.

How to play: Split into two teams. Stand or sit in a line. Give everyone a number. Call out a number and each player with that number must get to the ball and score a goal for their team.





Let's Play a Game - Football Statues



Aim: Become more confident with referees' hand signals when playing football.

Equipment: Music and whistle

How to play:

- * Choose someone to blow the whistle - this could be a leader, young leader, patrol leader or a sixer.
- * Show everyone the signals below.
- * Put on some age-appropriate music and let everyone dance around.
- * Then stop the music, blow the whistle and demonstrate the referee signal to copy and call out the name of the signal you are demonstrating.
- * When everyone has learned the signals, stop demonstrating and just shout out the signal after blowing the whistle.
- * Everyone should stay as still as they can - if they move they are out!
- * Play until you have a winner (or a group of winners)

Try it this way:

For younger sections, choose a smaller number of signals to learn to start with.



Direct Free Kick



Penalty Kick



Red Card



Corner Kick



Goal Kick





Attend a Senior Women's Match

Match Journal: Make a journal to record your thoughts about a game you have watched: what was the best moment of the game for you? What was the highlight for the players. What was the atmosphere like?

Football Analysis: Pick your favourite player and describe their style of football. What are their strengths and weaknesses?



There are opportunities for everyone Scan the QR code to find yours

- Disney Playmakers centres for girls aged 5-8
- Be Collective platform for volunteering opportunities (ages 16+)
- Leadership Programme
- Northern Ireland senior women's team fixtures and tickets
- NIFL and NIWFA fixtures
- Other (resource packs and useful information)



What is Disney Playmakers?
 Name 3 players in the NI women's team?
 What does NIFL stand for?
 What does NIWFA stand for?
 When is the next home game for the NI womens' team?
 Can you find out who your local club is?





If you are new to football, here are some words you might come across...

Goal... when the ball is kicked or headed into the net. Score more of these than your opponents to win the game.

Corner... when the ball is played from the corner of the pitch, taken to restart play after the ball has left the playing area.

Pitch... an area of grass marked with lines where a football match takes place.

Penalty... kick taken from a spot marked on the grass. A penalty is awarded by the referee when an attacking player is fouled within the penalty area.

Sub... short for 'substitute', a player who is swapped for another player during a match.

Dribble... when a player runs with the ball at their feet under close control.

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| Boots | Football |
| Goal | Player |
| Pitch | Team |
| Stadium | Dribble |
| Foul | Fan |
| Penalty | Sub |
| Coach | Referee |
| Corner Kick | Tackle |

F	A	Z	P	C	K	P	Q	O	P	V	B	P	T	M
V	V	F	I	K	O	Y	Q	V	I	O	Y	E	C	T
R	D	C	I	C	A	R	N	N	O	A	C	N	Q	R
D	E	X	S	S	O	F	N	T	D	Q	W	A	R	A
R	H	Y	D	R	N	A	S	E	V	H	S	L	L	I
I	V	Y	A	E	P	E	C	A	R	T	Y	T	C	R
B	Q	M	V	L	E	R	N	H	E	K	K	Y	K	P
B	A	G	N	R	P	H	C	O	F	F	I	Y	R	N
L	R	I	E	K	P	C	M	S	W	O	O	C	Y	R
E	I	F	J	I	G	T	F	N	O	O	Q	U	K	O
Z	E	U	E	T	F	I	A	W	Z	T	B	H	L	C
R	J	P	G	G	X	P	Y	C	Z	B	S	U	B	Z
Y	Y	O	M	A	E	T	E	T	K	A	E	P	F	K
F	A	M	U	I	D	A	T	S	L	L	F	Z	A	M
L	Q	E	G	Y	Z	E	S	X	F	L	E	F	N	N





Just for Fun

To play Spot the Ball you'll need to choose the most likely position of a missing ball in an action photograph. Mark with an **X** where you think the missing ball should be.

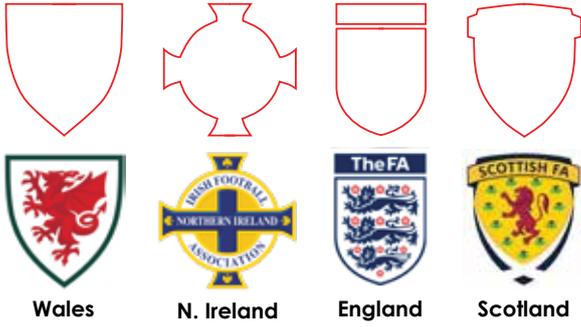


Fun Fact Section: Interesting stats about football - like the fastest goal ever scored or legendary players.

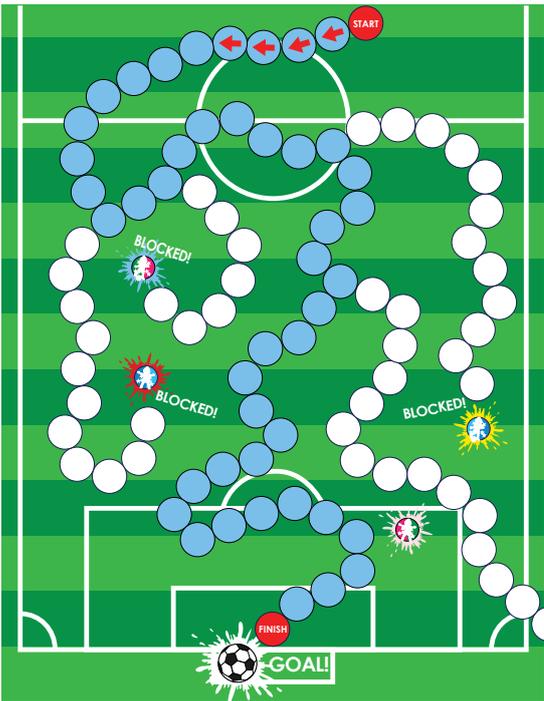
Simone Magill holds the world record for the fastest international goal in women's football. Previously US forward Alex Morgan had held the record at 12 seconds.

Simone achieved an 11-second goal against Georgia at the start of a European qualifier on 3 June 2016. It was the fastest ever international goal scored by a Northern Ireland player, male or female.





12	6	8	9	11	5	11	3



What is Disney Playmakers?

Disney Playmakers is a UEFA-led programme for girls aged 5-8 that uses the magic of Disney storytelling to teach basic football skills in a fun and engaging way.

Name 3 players in the NI womens team?

Jackie Burns, Rebecca McKenna, Sarah McFadden, Simone Magill and Caragh Hamilton. Other notable players are Lauren Wade, Chloe McCarron and Joely Andrews among others.

What does NIFL stand for?

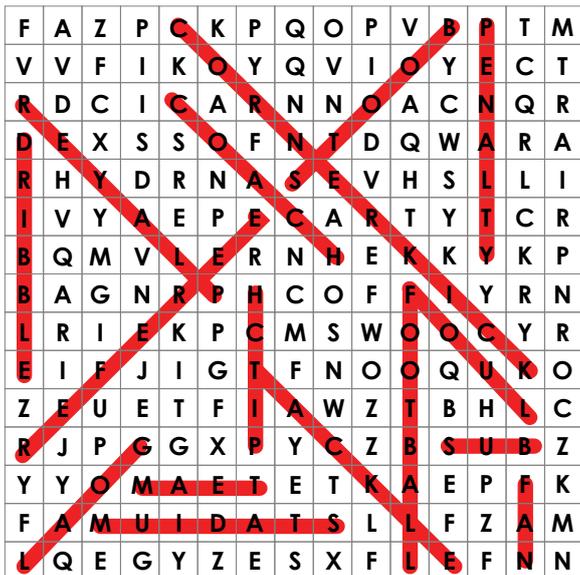
Northern Ireland Football League.

What does NIWFA stand for?

Northern Ireland Women's Football Association.

When is the next home game for the NI womens team?

Check date online.





Do I need to have a lot of knowledge about Football to use this pack?

No - this pack is for everyone, whether you're a seasoned football fan or don't know a thing. These fun activities are aimed at helping both volunteers and young members learn the basic football principles. They are easy to learn and do, and can be adapted to all levels and abilities. For more support with football activities, get in touch with your local club and keep an eye on the GGU website for football event opportunities.

Do I need special football equipment to use this pack?

No - most units will have access to suitable equipment to run these activities. For ball activities you can use any kind of ball - it does not have to be a heavy football.

How do I risk assess for the activities in the pack?

We suggest you write your risk assessment for these activities using the same principle as you would for any game that involves moving around with balls.

Is meeting a local football club compulsory?

We'd love for everyone to get in touch with their local football club and highly encourage you to do so. This is not compulsory for getting the badge, as we know this won't be possible for all units.

#GirlguidesPlayFootball #TogetherWeGrow

How to order your badge

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#GirlguidesPlayFootball #TogetherWeGrow

