

When the two teams meet in the World Cup this summer, things will be very different from their first match in 1881!

HOW ENGLAND'S REBEL WOMEN DOUBTED

Women are not fit enough to play a man's game!

We're a lot fitter than you!

1. SECRET IDENTITIES

The first women's international match was played between **Scotland** and **England** in May 1881. Back then, in the Victorian era, many people thought women shouldn't play football because it was "unladylike". A group of young women, all aged between 18 and 24, decided to arrange a big match to prove these people wrong. The match was played in Edinburgh, at Hibernian's **Easter Road** ground. The players representing Scotland included goalkeeper **Ethel Hay**, midfielder **Rose Rayman** and striker **Lilly St Clair**. England had **May Goodwin** in goal, **Maud Starling** in midfield and **Nelly Sherwood** up front. These were probably made-up names, as the players wanted to hide their real identities from people who were angry about them playing football.



AND SCOTLAND'S MEN PROVED WOMEN'S FOOTBALLERS WAS WRONG



2. CROWDS GATHER

There was a lot of interest in what the players would wear. Victorian women were expected to dress very conservatively, and would rarely be seen in sportswear. In fact, the footballers wore very similar kits to those worn by men at that time. The Scotland team wore **blue shirts**, long white "knickerbocker" shorts and blue and white soft caps. England wore **red shirts**, white shorts and red and white caps.

Up to **2,000** people turned up to watch the match, which was a very big crowd for 1881. Unfortunately, some of the spectators jeered and made rude remarks. The players managed to ignore them and played an exciting game. Scotland won **3-0**, with goals scored by Lilly St Clair, Louise Cole and Emma Wright.



3. TRY, TRY, AGAIN

The match was so successful that another was arranged for the following week. This time an even bigger crowd of **5,000** people turned up, but the game was interrupted when hundreds of spectators ran onto the pitch. The players had to abandon the match and flee from the ground. Thankfully the incident didn't put an end to women's football in the Victorian era.

It would take a long time for all of the doubters to change their minds, but Ethel, Rose, Lilly and the others had proved that women could play football.

When Scotland play England at the **2019 World Cup** this summer we should all remember these football pioneers.

