

Nordic influences in shaping of international football tournaments for women

Abstract

Objectives

Focus in research and history mainly has been put on men's football, and there still are hidden histories of women's football. This paper focuses on how Nordic actors in tournaments in China have influenced the global extensiveness of women's football.

Methods

Qualitative in-depth interviews carried out with early professionals and leaders involved in women's football. Scrapbooks from pioneers with media coverage, correspondence, and tournament programs from the 1960s to 2000s are studied. Academic literature and sport media are secondary sources.

Findings and discussion

Women's football became a symbol of large importance of the gender equality movement during the 1960s and 1970s, and initiatives from clubs in Scandinavia, and participation in tournaments in Asia led the path to world cup for female footballers. I address how invitational tournaments in China (1978-1991) widened the path to the first FIFA Women's World Cup through presenting data from the tournaments including the first FIFA organized world cup in 1991.

Conclusion

The tournaments held on Taiwan in Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung in 1978, 1981 and 1988 opened the doors for organizing Women's World Cup by FIFA. Female pioneers as Ellen Wille from Norway, the first female to enter the table for speakers at the FIFA Annual Congress in 1986, suggested a World Cup in football for women and inclusion of women's football in the Olympic programme. World Cup established in 1991 and inclusion in the Olympic Games in 1996. To decrease the gap of knowledge about history might influence the future of football.

Key words

Women's football, gender, history, football tournaments