

Subway renews partnership with WSL Football as the League Cup becomes the Players Cup

From the 2026/27 season, WSL Football's secondary competition will have a new name and new format with Subway agreeing a new multi-year deal to become title partner.

Previously The Subway Women's League Cup, the competition has been renamed the Subway Players Cup to recognise that the new format has been built around player welfare principles and that the ambition for the competition is to put players at the heart of everything.

The group stage of The Subway Players Cup will adopt a Swiss-style league format, with fixtures drawn by region. This structure guarantees a minimum of six matches and is designed to increase playing opportunities for players not involved in European competition which ensures they are not underloaded and playing too few matches.

The new proposals will mean the three UEFA Champions League qualified teams would not participate in the competition because of the increased playing load due to the calendar.

A competition designed around player welfare

When WSL Football was established, it was agreed that a competition review would take place, including the secondary cup competition. The result of a comprehensive format review which included consultation with clubs, players and fans recognised there was an opportunity to reshape the tournament and provide it with a new clarity of purpose.

Because the proposed new format will not include UEFA Champions League clubs, the competition required repositioning, as it will not feature every club across the Barclays Women's Super League and Barclays Women's Super League 2.

Built with player welfare at its core, the new format of the Subway Players Cup addresses calendar congestion by removing UEFA Women's Champions League qualified clubs from the competition while increasing meaningful playing minutes, rotation opportunities and development pathways for all other squads and opening the possibility for new winners of the competition.

Players spoken to about the changes are excited by the format, the prospect of more matches and a viable chance to win silverware. They see the competition as valuable and believe the structure will increase competitiveness and appreciate that welfare and

development are the primary drivers.

New competition identity

To coincide with the launch of the Subway Players Cup, a distinctive new identity was developed for the competition, drawing inspiration from the theme of player movement which was central to the launch of the new WSL Football brand.

While the WSL Football identity reflects the dynamism of on pitch movement, the new identity for the cup competition focuses on the movement associated with celebration and features an emblem inspired by the action of lifting a trophy.

With new icons set to light up the competition and a platform for emerging and established talent alike, the primary colour palette combines the signature colours of the BWSL and BWSL2, signalling that clubs from both leagues will be competing for the trophy.

Throughout the design process players, fans and clubs were consulted and fed back to help shape and refine the new competition identity.

Subway renewal

Subway will become the title partner of The Players Cup following two successful seasons supporting The League Cup. The renewed partnership ensures the continued growth of women's football, whilst also supporting Subway's work in communities across the UK that champion active lifestyles and increase accessibility to the sport.

Since Subway's involvement with WSL Football, they have developed groundbreaking nutrition guidance on female focused fuelling in collaboration with The Well HQ, and the most recent Subway League Cup Final took place in Bristol at Ashton Gate on Sunday 15th March. Chelsea beat Manchester United 2-0 in front of over 21,000 fans – a record attendance for women's league cup final.

Zarah Al-Kudcy, Chief Revenue Officer, WSL Football said: *"Subway have already proved themselves a valued partner of the League Cup and we have no doubt they will bring that same energy, creativity and commitment to the Players Cup."*

"We wanted to create something that provided a platform to provide meaningful playing minutes for young and fringe players and to address disparity on playing opportunities across the leagues without compromising our player welfare principles in an increasingly busy women's calendar. We've spoken to a lot of people in the game about the direction we want to take, and we are confident that we have found a positive solution and that The Players Cup can become an exciting new domestic competition in England."

Kirstey Elston, Senior Marketing Director, Marketing, EMEA Subway said *"We're excited to renew our partnership with WSL Football as they continue to bring something fresh to the women's game. The Players Cup represents a brilliant opportunity to support a*

sport that's growing fast and inspiring communities across the country and we're proud to stand alongside WSL Football in championing the women's game."

New Format Structure

The Subway Players Cup will be split into two stages – the League Phase, and Knockout Phase.

The League Phase will be played primarily during the UEFA Women's Champions League match rounds and will replace the previous group phase.

All 23 participating teams will compete together in a single, unified league table, where each club plays three home and three away fixtures against teams in their regionalised section.

Fixtures for the League Phase will be announced on Thursday 6 August at 12pm.

In total, there will be 69 fixtures in the League Phase, with these played between September and December with three points for a win. For any game tied after 90 minutes, a penalty shoot-out will take place where the winner receives two points, and the loser is awarded one point.

Following the conclusion of those games, the teams who occupy the top eight positions in the league standings will progress to the Knockout Phase. This will take place from January through to March, with the quarter finals across January 13 and 14, 2027 in the following structure:

- 1st Place v 8th Place (QF1)
- 2nd Place v 7th Place (QF2)
- 3rd Place v 6th Place (QF3)
- 4th Place v 5th Place (QF4)

The winners of those fixtures will then meet in the semi-finals across February 10 and 11, with the higher ranked team from the league phase earning home advantage as follows:

- Winner of QF1 v Winner of QF3
- Winner of QF2 v Winner of QF4

The final will then be played at a to-be-confirmed neutral venue across the weekend of March 13 and 14, 2027.

For all the details regarding the Subway Players Cup, visit [HERE](#)

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