



PLAY ON

from ADVERSITY TO ADVANTAGE
THROUGH 140 YEARS OF
WOMEN'S SOCCER

HEIDI SMITH

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Play On Book Club Kit! I'm glad you've chosen to dive into 140 years of this incredible and mostly untold history with me. This book is a celebration of the women who have kept this game alive and advancing through bans, discrimination and abuse and achieved remarkable feats along the way.

Whether you are a current or former player, coach, parent, casual fan, female, or someone who knows and cares about a female, I hope this book sparks reflection, inspires action and affords a few laughs along the way.



Heidi Smith

Glossary of Soccer Fouls

Dangerous Play: Actions that threaten injury to someone while trying to play the ball.

Obstruction: Using your body to block an opponent when the ball isn't nearby.

Delay of Game: Tactics that slow down the restart of play.

Taunting: Inciting or degrading others with words or actions.

Added Injury Time: Extra minutes tacked on to compensate for stoppages.

Field of Play Violation: Unsafe or unfair field conditions.

Own Goals: Accidentally scoring against your own team.

Out of Bounds: When the ball completely crosses the sideline or endline.

Unsporting Conduct: Unethical or dishonorable behavior.



Activities

Your Own 'Play On' Moment: Journal about a time you kept going despite adversity.

New Rules: As a group, create new 'fouls' and 'advantages' in work and life. What would be considered 'yellow card' offenses (calling for a warning) versus 'red card' offenses (ejection from the game)? What would 'playing on' look like?



Team Chant: If your book club had a team chant, what would it be?



Guiding Questions

Please note: In all cases, while you are invited to share a personal experience if you so desire, it is by no means mandatory and you can discuss these questions in the abstract if you prefer.

Chapters 1-3

Violence against women continues to be a societal issue. Reviewing the suggestions provided by UNESCO in Chapter One, Section 5, which do you think would be most effective in your community and why?

In chapter two, Lucia Mijares Martinez describes how family and/or attitudes about gender roles can be one of the most difficult obstacles for athletes to overcome. How have you experienced or seen family support or the lack of it play out in women's success?

Delay, either intentionally or through neglect, becomes a significant obstacle in chapter 3. What role have you seen timing play in success and failure, either your own or others'?



Guiding Questions

Chapters 4 – 6

The media has a huge influence on how women athletes are portrayed and in chapter 4 we learn that sponsors and the media tend to punish women more harshly than men for the same infractions. In what ways have you seen double standards in your work or life and what strategies have worked to challenge those standards?

It turns out that hormone cycles play a significant role in women's risk of injury, recovery from injury and risk of mental health issues. How important is it for girls to understand the changes brought on by puberty? What recommendations do you have to help them navigate those changes?

Kansas City is home to the first ever stadium created solely for female athletes. What other spaces in your community are just for women and why is it important to have those spaces?



Guiding Questions

Chapters 7 – 9

Where and how have you seen the attribution gap at play, either in your own life or others'?

How does the safe sport movement relate to other movements you have experienced such as initiatives to create better work environments, classrooms, etc.?

The USWNT achieved equal pay after a 30-year struggle. How might the lessons from their experience benefit women fighting for equal pay in other arenas?

Bonus questions:

What aspect of Play On resonated with you the most and why?

What did you find hard to relate to?

What was your most important takeaway from the book and how might you apply that in life?

What would you like to learn more about?



Bonus Content:

How Mary Harvey Changed FIFA

If you're going to blow your cover, national television is a good place to do it.

Mary Harvey was working in Germany as a management services consultant in 1989, helping international corporations build stock options and trade futures. But she had a secret: unbeknownst to her colleagues, Harvey had joined FSV Frankfurt, a local club soccer team.

"I learned very quickly that nice girls with good educations from good families didn't play football," she says. "Maybe they watched it, but women, back then, played tennis or golf. I learned not to talk about it at work."

Keeping things quiet got more difficult when her team went to the club final, which was played before the men's club final in the Berlin Olympic Stadium in front of 75,000 people - and televised. Two minutes before the end of the game, the other team was awarded a penalty. Harvey, the keeper, saved it. Now, she was featured in every news story about the final.

"The next day I was back at work and people were like, 'Were you on television this weekend?' she laughs. The word was out and from that point on, Harvey never hid her involvement with the sport. Over the last several decades, she has played a central role in shaping how it is governed both nationally and internationally.

Within six months of her arrival in Germany, she was called up to the U.S. Women's National Team, which went on to win the first Women's World Cup in 1991 and the first Olympic soccer gold medal in 1996. She served on U.S. Soccer's Board of Directors for 12 years, including five on the Executive Committee and in 2003 she became the first woman - and first American - hired by FIFA as its Director of Development. During five years at FIFA, Harvey managed a \$160 million per year budget and worked with 208 soccer federations around the world.

At the time she joined FIFA, the organization had gone through five previous directors in five years and key programs lacked both oversight and transparency. Culturally, no one was quite sure what to do with her. "I was a member of senior management who deserved to be there based on track record and from a career perspective," she says. "But I was also female. And American. What do Americans know about football? What do women know? They wanted to put me in a 'she's not qualified' box, but they couldn't because I had a bona fide credential in the sport."



Harvey was used to working primarily with men from her corporate experience, but FIFA was different. “I’m a performance-based creature,” she explains. “There had always been a scoreboard. As a national team athlete, performance is how you get paid. Management consulting means you’re convincing someone to pay you \$300 an hour for your brain, so it’s absolutely about outcomes.” She assumed FIFA would be the same way.

That assumption didn’t last long. Soon, it became evident that less tangible issues determined what was possible, such as whether or not then-President Sepp Blatter liked you. “That was a big adjustment for me,” she says. “When I got there, people wanted to discount me for so many reasons. So I said, ‘I’ve got to have a scoreboard and a timer. I have three months to prove why I’m here.’”

Her first move was to clean up FIFA’s Financial Assistance program, through which soccer associations in 208 countries received \$250,000 every year. Over 90% of the staff’s time was spent on that program, which Harvey describes as ‘a mess.’ “It was fragmented, ad hoc and reactive rather than proactive.” That meant that FIFA’s other two development programs, GOAL (an infrastructure program which provided funding for countries to build stadiums, training centers and fields) and Education (a program to train coaches for men’s and women’s soccer, futsal and beach soccer, plus refereeing and medical skills) were getting scant attention.

Meanwhile, within the Financial Assistance program, over 60% of the programs chosen to be audited by KPMG each year had adverse findings. “There were clearly big problems,” says Harvey. “The first thing that was very clear to me was that we needed to redo regulations and put a process in place to review how people were planning to use their money once a year. That sounds obvious, but it wasn’t happening. It was a stretch for developing countries, because everyone was in firefighting mode: we need money right now for this.”

Her team created a system where every country that received funding had to create a proactive business plan. If they were audited and the audit showed a misuse of funds, those funds would be deducted from the following year’s payment. In particularly egregious cases, funding was suspended until things changed. “Within the first three months of my time at FIFA, we got regulations in place that had gotten past the Executive Committee,” Harvey notes.

As part of the change management process, the entire development team broke into groups and traveled to 180 countries within six weeks to meet with different federations and explain the new process - and how it would benefit them.

“It was about enrolling them in why transparency and accountability are good things for them,” says Harvey. “If you do it this way, you get money four times a year. You have reliability in terms of cash flow; you know when the money is coming, and we’re going to help you through it. Now, when the press wants to vilify you and say you’re a bunch of crooks, you can hold up your audit.” The approach worked and the program has become one of Harvey’s legacies at FIFA.