



Women's Ballon d'Or Power Rankings: The Spain trio to beat as England's Arsenal star looks to make case

With the Euros now underway, individual performances will have a huge bearing on who wins the prestigious award.

By Kristy Williams
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UEFA Women's EURO 2025 is underway, and how individuals like Spain stars Alexia Putellas and Aitana Bonmati and English golden girl Alessia Russo performs could have a big say on who wins the Women's Ballon d'Or this year.

The prestigious award is based on a voting system that primarily involves international football journalists and experts, with one from each of the top 100 FIFA-ranked nations casting votes for their top 10 players from a shortlist compiled by French outfit L'Equipe with input from greats of the game.

It's far from a perfect list of which players have had the best seasons (the voting period begins on August 1 and will end after the Euros). A lack of visibility and knowledge from some countries has been painfully obvious over the years, with some only focusing on a major tournament like a World Cup. Recency bias is obviously a factor, but the voting does appear to be getting better giving the increased growth and visibility of more leagues.

There are favourites, of course, that tend to trend, while defenders aside from Lionesses legend Lucy Bronze don't tend to get a look in - it's usually about who can score in the best leagues, in finals and at the world's biggest tournaments.

Based on that, here are our power rankings on which players may be in with a shot at winning the 2025 Women's Ballon d'Or.

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1938039760515138044>

15 - Temwa Chawinga (Kansas City, Malawi)

- 2024 NWSL post August 1: 11 matches, 11 goals
- 2024 NWSL Championship semi-finalist
- 2025 NWSL: 13 matches, 8 goals, 2 assists

The lightning-quick Malawian striker has been a revelation since joining the Current, breaking multiple records last season, including becoming the first player to score against all 13 opponents and breaking Sam Kerr's single-season record with 20 goals.

She's started the season on fire against, with eight goals and two assists from the opening 13 games and is just incredibly aesthetically pleasing to watch thanks to her mixture of speed, determination and innate goal nous.

If she makes the shortlist she would no doubt garner plenty of votes from African countries thanks to her brilliant NWSL form and the fact she fights so hard for increased rights and investment for female players back in Malawi, which lags behind when it comes to football as it sadly does for many African nations who don't take women's sports seriously.

For her part, Chawinga is keeping her feet firmly on the ground, insisting her brilliant form is all down to her teammates.

"It meant a lot to me [to break records], but it was not by myself. My teammates helped me a lot to achieve that goal, they convinced me that I could do it [and] it made me very happy to have teammates like that," she told [Olympics.com](#) last month.

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1847805181087666537>

14 - Kadidiatou Diani (Lyon, France)

- Première Ligue + Women's Champions League (UWCL): 29 matches, 16 goals, 10 assists
- Nations League: 3 matches, 1 goal, 1 assist
- Won Première Ligue, Champions League semi-finalist

Diani, like Caroline Graham Hansen was in days gone by, has often been bizarrely snubbed in Ballon d'Or voting, but it feels like this is the year that could change all that, especially with France looking so good ahead of the Euros.

Playing primarily down the right wing, Diani has been superlative for Lyon this year, proving herself to be the ultimate big-game player as she was second in the league for goal-creating actions and fifth for combined goals and assists.

As Lyon won their fourth-straight Premiere Ligue title, she assisted in the semi and scored in the final. Diani's two assists and goal in the second-leg of the Champions League quarter-finals against Bayern Munich made a mockery of what had been a very strong defensive line. Her brilliant finish in the first leg of the semi-final looked to have given Lyon the edge to advance to the final before their second-leg capitulation.

Even though France are in the Group of Death, they really look to be building quite nicely for a deep run into the tournament; and Diani's eye-catching runs down the right will be a big part of any success that comes their way.

https://twitter.com/UEFAcom_fr/status/1914601623562621380/

13 - Patri Guijarro (Barcelona, Spain)

- LigaF + UWCL: 36 matches, 7 goals, 12 assists
- Nations League: 4 matches, 1 goal, 1 assist
- Won LigaF, Supercopa, Copa de la Reina. Champions League runner-up.

Talking of the ultimate big-game players, who can score when the pressure is at its highest, the fact it can be someone who is simultaneously (subjectively) the best No. 6 in the world shows just what a remarkable player Guijarro is.

Putellas and Bonmati may, rightly, take a lot of the headlines when it comes to Barcelona and Spain's midfield, but the anchor at the base of it is no less important.

The timing of her tackles and interventions to protect her back four don't get the attention they probably should - though it is common that No. 6s (like Keira Walsh, Yui Hasegawa and Demaris Egurola) are often underappreciated. But her passing range and first touch is simply phenomenal and that has been on display in the Nations League, UWCL and Liga F to the max this season.

Guijarro, who has an incredible Leah Williamson-like ability for pinpoint long balls, led the Nations League (outside of defenders and goalkeepers, who play safer passes) in passing percentage, was eighth in the top five European leagues for the same stat and was sixth in the Spanish league for goal-creating actions. And who can forget her goal in Barcelona's Supercopa final win and assisting Claudia Pina for the match-winning goal in Spain's vital 2-1 comeback win over England just weeks ago.

Barcelona coach Pere Romeu recently admitted Guijarro was in the form of her life.

"Patri is in one of the best moments of her career. She is very precise with the ball, very good at attacking, and even improving in defense," he said.

<https://twitter.com/UWCL/status/1883157493544608040/>

12 - Pernille Harder (Bayern Munich, Denmark)

- Frauen Bundesliga + UWCL: 30 matches, 20 goals, 5 assists
- Nations League: 6 matches, 2 goals, 2 assists
- Won Frauen Bundesliga, DFB Pokal, World Sevens Tournament

A voting favourite, Harder has been back to her world-class best this season after struggling with injuries in her first season at Bayern. The Denmark captain is one of the world's best leaders, an incredible role model for the LGBT+ community and has shown this season that she is quite good at football, no matter where in the front-line she plays.

The first player to win the UEFA Women's Player of the Year award twice, Harder has been scoring goals in just about every way possible, is 12th across the top five European leagues when it comes to goals and assists combined after finishing third in the Frauen Bundesliga Golden Boot race, despite spending a lot of her matches setting plays up into the box.

Her hat-tricks in the DFB Pokal semi-final and Bayern's stunning Champions League win over Arsenal highlighted how she rises to the occasion, and her passionate celebrations were testament to her ability to lead from the front and the Danish captain knows how huge the Euros can be.

"There is always pressure in major tournaments, but when women's football is developing so quickly across Europe, knowing the effect of a good tournament more widely back in Denmark adds more pressure. If we get to the knockout stage and if we do well there, that is something that brings the country together," she told [The Guardian](#) a week ago.

Everything about Denmark this Euros will centre around Harder, and you'd be a brave person to bet that won't work out well.

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1903673310287651010>

11 - Melchie Dumornay (Lyon, Haiti)

- Première Ligue + UWCL: 28 matches, 22 goals, 9 assists
- Won Première Ligue, Champions League semi-finalist

That Dumornay is still just 21 is wild. Moving to the most successful club in women's football history hasn't seemed to phase her since joining from Reims ahead of the 2023/24 season. Prior to that, she made the massive move 7000km move from Haiti to France as a teenager who was seen as one of the best youngsters in the world - and she well and truly is now.

It's quite scary how clinical her finishing ability was this season despite the youngster still having plenty of development to make, and the way she burst through Arsenal's defence at the Emirates in the first leg of the Champions League semi-final was jaw-dropping. She scored in the next leg, too, though Lyon obviously didn't go through to the final.

Dumornay scored in both legs of Lyon's quarter-final against Bayern Munich and UEFA technical observer Fritz Kromp said she was almost impossible to defend.

"When Dumornay was playing with her back to the opponent, she was very tough to defend against. The Bayern defenders had no chance to get the ball or see the ball. You had the feeling that no one was able to defend against her," he said in March after Lyon advanced to the semi-finals.

<https://twitter.com/UWCL/status/1932430800949268520>

10 - Barbra Banda (Orlando Pride, Zambia)

- 2024 NWSL post August 1: 13 matches, 5 goals, 2 assists
- 2025 NWSL: 13 matches, 8 goals, 1 assist
- Won 2024 NWSL Premiership and Championship

Speaking of strikers being practically impossible to defend: Barbra Banda. Alongside the legendary Marta, the key to Orlando's record-breaking NWSL premiership and championship-winning season just cannot stop scoring. And often in the most exhilarating way possible.

Scoring the lone goal in Orlando's 1-0 NWSL final win over Washington was one thing, but the manner of it, tearing 40 metres down the right wing before cutting inside and finishing at the near-post was something else. Predictably, she has started the 2025 season on fire too, despite some really hateful and untrue things being said about her by uninformed individuals.

She has been a standout in both NWSL seasons, and again will rightly garner a portion of the votes from African countries. It's a salivating prospect to think of Banda playing in the Champions League - though that possibility doesn't appear to be coming anytime soon given how well she has taken to the NWSL.

Banda told *BBC Sport* she wanted to be 'the greatest footballer in the world' in December, and it's clear she feels like she has already gone to another level since moving to the USA.

"Here, the league (NWSL) is more competitive. You have to up your game to do well. I feel I've changed my game and improved in so many ways," the Zambian striker said.

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1860504519995768853>

9 - Ewa Pajor (Barcelona, Poland)

- LigaF + UWCL: 39 matches, 32 goals, 12 assists
- Nations League: 6 matches, 4 goals, 3 assists
- Won LigaF, Supercopa, Copa de la Reina. Champions League runner-up

Pajor might have had the unfortunate distinction of losing all five of her Champions League finals after Barcelona shockingly went down to Arsenal, but that does not diminish the incredible season Poland's brilliant No. 9 had. Sure, it's a dream team to be a striker for, but Pajor was undoubtedly been the club's best and most effective striker since Jenni Hermoso left all those years ago.

That speed, the ability to get on the end of through balls and finish clinically is filthy to watch at times, and Pajor will win the new Women's Gerd Müller Trophy to recognise the world's top female goal scorer at the Ballon d'Or in September - and may well also garner a fair few votes.

Not only did she win the Liga F Golden Boot, but she finished second in assists as she scored in both of Barcelona's semi-final legs against Chelsea in the Champions League.

And her Nations League campaign for Poland? Electrifying. You might have had to watch on obscure YouTube screens, but it was well worth it as she provided highlight after highlight, be it scoring or setting up. Her national team boss Nina Patalon said joining the Blaugrana from Wolfsburg has taken Pajor's game to another level.

"The way Barcelona play requires players to be more involved in the build-up and Ewa has adapted well to that," the Poland manager said ahead of the Euros.

"She has also refined her movement off the ball, making her even more dangerous in attacking situations. Her work rate has always been impressive, but at Barcelona, she's taken it to another level."

<https://twitter.com/WEURO2025/status/1936777190210961535/>

8 - Lindsey Heaps [nee Horan] (Lyon, USA)

- Première Ligue + UWCL: 27 matches, 13 goals, 10 assists
- Won Première Ligue, Champions League semi-finalist

The USWNT captain is one of the favourites when it comes to Ballon d'Or voting, no matter what seems to transpire; but once again Heaps' output for Lyon has been immense. First in assists and goals combined in the French league, second in goal-creating actions and 10th for pass percentage despite playing a very advanced role as a No. 10, Heaps just keeps finding ways to pop up in front of goal.

The USA have had a lot of players miss time through either injury or rest since the Olympics - including Heaps - which has robbed a few players of Ballon d'Or chances; but the skipper's exploits when she has been on the field are hard to ignore. And she always, always snags votes.

But USA boss Emma Hayes said what was so impressive about Heaps is what the cameras don't see.

"This leader beside me, you don't see all the work she does off the pitch," the former Chelsea mentor said recently.

"You don't see all the conversations she has, whether it's helping nurture a young player, or whether it's to settle nerves or to remind people of their confidence or to push back on the things that matter most."

https://twitter.com/UEFAcom_fr/status/1903118441030226176/

7 - Caroline Graham Hansen (Barcelona, Norway)

- Liga F + UWCL: 31 matches, 14 goals, 12 assists
- Nations League: 3 matches, 1 goal
- Won LigaF, Supercopa, Copa de la Reina. Champions League semi-finalist

The Norwegian famously kept getting snubbed in voting, but after setting the world on fire last season she could no longer be ignored and was desperately unlucky not to win in 2024. She hasn't quite reached those dizzying heights this season, but it has still been another strong campaign and with Norway having a relatively easy route in the Euros she is poised to have a big tournament.

Graham Hansen was sixth across the top five leagues in Europe for goals and assists combined and second in Liga F for chances created as her wizardry dribbling with the ball at her feet made her a nightmare to defend and secured a vital assist against Chelsea in the Champions League semi-final.

But Norwegian boss Gemma Grainger said the superstar right winger was far more than her many, many highlights in front of goal.

"People see the attacking side of her game and the individual quality that she has, that goes without saying. But if you see her out of possession and some of the defensive runs that she made, she has that all-round game," she said recently.

"That's what makes her a special player. Some of the best players maybe only have one side of that game but she has both. She led us out and her leadership skills, both on and off the pitch, are vital to us."

<https://twitter.com/WEURO2025/status/1863916845612601822/>

6 - Sandy Baltimore (Chelsea, France)

- WSL, FA Cup, League Cup + UWCL: 28 matches, 9 goals, 6 assists
- Nations League: 6 matches, 5 goals
- Won WSL, FA Cup, League Cup, Champions League semi-finalist

She might have starred in the unnatural position at left-back for Chelsea for much of the season, but Baltimore is poised to star at the Euros much closer to goal down the

wing for France after starring in the Nations League with five goals from just six matches.

Baltimore was brilliant after starting in the back four for Chelsea after Niamh Charles' shoulder injury to begin the season, but the Lioness then just couldn't unseat the Frenchwoman such was her stunning form both with and without the ball for much of the WSL.

Despite playing further away from goal, she scored two goals and assisted the other in Chelsea's 3-0 FA Cup final win over Man United, assisted and scored in the vital second-leg Champions League quarter-final win over Man City and has been one of the Nations League's best players as Les Bleues easily topped their group.

Chelsea boss Sonia Bompastor said her compatriot had a brilliant season, and was vital for the side going forward towards goal.

"She can defend well, but can also help the team move forward to create opportunities in the box. It's really nice to have a player like her," she told the [club's website](#) in April.

"I think for me, when you look at the season, she's making a big impact for the team and in that position. That's good because I know she can play left winger. She played that position in the last international break with the national team in France and was successful. She also scored in that position."

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1924093695189807367>

5 - Claudia Pina (Barcelona, Spain)

- Liga F + UWCL: 36 matches, 20 goals, 8 assists
- Nations League: 6 matches, 4 goals, 2 assists
- Won LigaF, Supercopa, Copa de la Reina. Champions League runner-up

The Spanish prodigy has sat behind Mariona Caldentey and Salma Paralluelo for the past two seasons at both Barcelona and in the national team (though she did spend time refusing to be called up over the poor treatment by the federation) but even though she hasn't started every single match she might just be one of the most in-form players in the world.

More impressive than her goals has been the manner and nature of them, and the fact a stunning amount of them have been match-winners.

Most impressive was probably the two goals that sealed a comeback win after going 0-1 down to England in the vital Nations League match before the Euros that secured Spain's passage to the next stage despite inexplicably starting the first 65 minutes on the bench.

That came after her strike kickstarted another comeback win for Spain over Belgium, and who could forget her stunning performance across both legs against Chelsea in

the Champions league semi-finals, which yielded three goals and an assist; and featured a long-range banger that went top bins from outside the box.

Pina was second in Liga F for goal-creating actions and first in shots on target per 90 as well as scoring both goals in Barcelona's win in the Copa de la Reina final, and second in goal-creating actions across the top five European leagues this season, but it's the fact she is in scarcely believable form for a Spain side facing an easy route deep into the Euros that makes her such a top chance for the Ballon d'Or as well.

La Rojas boss Monste Tome said Pina's success has been a long time coming.

"Both here and at her club, she plays a vital role and has impressive stats. She's always stood out in the youth ranks – I've known her since the under-16s – and it's a joy for all of us to have her here. She's contributing a lot and we're very happy with her performances," the Spain manager said.

<https://twitter.com/UWCL/status/1923400800757223794/>

4 - Alessia Russo (Arsenal, England)

- WSL, FA Cup, League Cup + UWCL: 36 matches, 19 goals, 5 assists
- Nations League: 4 matches, 2 goals
- Won Champions League

The WSL's (equal) Golden Boot winner has always been a world-class player, but since Renee Slegers took charge at Arsenal and injected her striker with more confidence and trusted ability to use her creativity, Russo has gone to another stratospheric level.

So much more than a regular No. 9, Russo's workrate to track back is relentless, as is her ability to hold-up play; but it has been her clinical finishing and scoring in the biggest matches with it all on the line that has really began to stand out this season.

She scored once and assisted another as Arsenal came from behind away against Lyon in the Champions League semi-final to advance to the final. She scored a double in the quarter-final as the Gunners overcame the 0-2 deficit in the second leg.

So much of England's play into the box this tournament, as the reigning champions look to go back-to-back will revolve around Russo, and she will have so much quality ball coming into her from the likes of Lauren Hemp, Beth Mead, Georgia Stanway and Keira Walsh

And Russo will go into the tournament in-form and sky high on confidence.

"Obviously winning the Champions League helps massively. Being in that environment, a high-pressure game against some of the best players in the world, was hopefully a lesson for us to learn how to manage these moments," the Arsenal star said ahead of the tournament.

"Hopefully we'll use it going forward as there [are] lots of players in our team that have played in these games and had those experiences."

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1891125596681359658>

3 - Aitana Bonmati (Barcelona, Spain)

- LigaF + UWCL: 37 matches, 15 goals, 11 assists
- Nations League: 6 matches, 2 goals, 2 assists
- Won LigaF, Supercopa, Copa de la Reina. Champions League runner-up

Having won the last two Ballon d'Or trophies, Bonmati has once again shown why she is one of the world's greatest players and midfielders in what has been a season full of trophies for Barcelona and what could very well be a Euro-winning campaign for Spain despite suffering with meningitis just prior to the tournament.

The diminutive midfielder is impossible to tear your eyes off with the ball at her feet, and her stunning goal as she tore through the entire Chelsea midfield and defence to open the scoring in Barcelona's second leg win in the Champions League semi-finals was a breathtaking example of her capabilities.

Across the top five European leagues this season, Bonmati was first in goal-creating actions, third in chances created and easily finished first in chances created and goal-creating actions in the Spanish league, such was her incredible dominance creating in the final third.

Manchester City's legendary manager Pep Guardiola is famously a huge fan of the reigning Ballon d'Or winner.

"Aitana Bonmatí is a football player who has me completely in love with her for the way she plays. I would say she is like the women's [Andrés] Iniesta playing for Barcelona," he said of his fellow Spaniard.

<https://twitter.com/UWCL/status/1930914811329880148/>

2 - Mariona Caldentey (Arsenal, Spain)

- WSL, FA Cup, League Cup + UWCL: 36 matches, 18 goals, 9 assists
- Nations League: 6 matches, 1 goal, 5 assists
- Won Champions League

After moving to Arsenal in the preseason, Caldentey's campaign for the Gunners was one of the more incredible individual campaigns the WSL has ever seen - and it delivered them a Champions League title - her third straight after two with Barcelona.

The fact she did it as a left-winger, No. 10, No. 6 and a false nine across various stages of the season made it more impressive, and her work-rate both with and without the ball is simply sensational. Even when she was playing as a deep-lying midfielder, something she's never really needed to do in her career, she still found

ways to score the most vital of goals which will make her one of the most popular players in voting.

Caldentey scored in Arsenal's stunning vital second-leg comeback win over Real Madrid in the Champions League quarter-finals, and did the same against Lyon in the semis across both legs, with her brilliant curling strike from the edge of the box away at Lyon one of the best in the UWCL this season.

The Spaniard is poised to play a huge role across both wings for Las Rojas this Euros, after leading or being close to it in just about every statistical category in the WSL this season. First in chances created (by a long way), progressive passes and second in tackles won showcases just how insane she has been both with and without the ball.

Sleger said Caldentey has been the catalyst for setting a winning mentality for the Gunners, saying she: 'Is a winner in everything. She is moving the culture forward', but the Spaniard said it all came down to sheer hard work.

"What I learnt is talent is not enough. You need to work hard, to be fit, to be ready for the battles. It's not easy and it takes time. It takes teamwork. That's what we are building now. I can feel it. We need to believe in what we are doing, in the Arsenal way. We are on the way," Caldentey said towards the end of the season.

<https://twitter.com/OptusSport/status/1891113336491946260/>

1 - Alexia Putellas (Barcelona, Spain)

- LigaF + UWCL: 34 matches, 19 goals, 15 assists
- Nations League: 4 matches, 2 goals
- Won LigaF, Supercopa, Copa de la Reina. Champions League runner-up

There's a reason why Putellas is called 'La Reina', and it isn't just because she scores and creates plenty of goals. The Barcelona captain plays the game like a puppet master pulling the strings with breathtaking wizardry with the ball at her feet and a grace that shows her incredible leadership capabilities which have overcome so, so much for both her domestic and national team.

The stats do speak for themselves. Across the top five leagues in Europe she is second in goals and assists combined, third in goal-creating actions and fifth in chances created. She finished first in the Spanish league for assists and second in goals, despite playing as a midfielder, an output more akin to a traditional No. 9 striker.

But it was the manner and importance of her contributions that are more important. How someone can assist some many goals with back-heels, flicks and first-touch stunners is hard to believe. Who could forget her back-heel flick to assist Pina in the Champions League semi-final against Chelsea; where she assisted three goals across both legs. Can't forget that long-range strike against Man City in the crucial match that secured top spot in their group, either.

That Putellas appears poised to win a third Ballon d'Or and is in the form of her already incredible storied career is one reason for opponents in this Euros to be worried.

The other is because she, unforgettably, suffered an ACL injury the day before the last Euros and watched as La Rojas lost to England in the dying moments in the quarter-final amid all the players were going through off the field with since-disgraced Jorge Vilda. Putellas is on a mission.

"I won't lie to you, I've had this tournament on my mind after getting injured the day before the last Euros," she told reporters.

"I'm really looking forward to it. I have been preparing for this moment for a long time, but above all I want to enjoy it and compete to win every game."

<https://twitter.com/UWCL/status/1870099584677974115/>