

The FA Women's
Continental Tyres
League Cup

**THE FA WOMEN'S
CONTINENTAL TYRES
LEAGUE CUP FINAL
2023**



ARSENAL v CHELSEA

Sunday 5 March 2023, 3PM
Selhurst Park, Crystal Palace

£3

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

AS WELL AS THE PLAYERS ON THE PITCH, THERE IS A HUGE TEAM INVOLVED TO MAKE TODAY'S EVENT RUN SMOOTHLY. **TAMZINE NEALE**, FA SENIOR BROADCAST OPERATIONS MANAGER, REVEALS HOW THE LIVE COVERAGE HAPPENS Interview **ABBIE INGHAM**

Tell us a bit about what you do. What's your job specification in a nutshell?

I am a senior broadcast operations manager, which means looking after every aspect of broadcast operations at the FA for men's and women's football across international and domestic competitions.

We work closely with every broadcast partner to ensure they have everything they need. Ultimately, we're there to service our broadcast partners and make sure they're delivering and getting what they need from us.

There must be a lot of organisation involved in your role, especially when planning for the smooth operation of big events such as the Continental Tyres Cup Final?

There is. The broadcast manager will oversee the operation, but the planning starts a few months out, from the point of agreeing a kick-off time.

Then we get to a point of on-site visits and meeting with all the internal FA teams to understand how we're going to deliver. Especially with the Continental Cup Final being at Selhurst Park, we have to get to know the stadium to make sure everyone knows what each room will be used for and how many days we have access to the venue.

We then take the broadcast on-site, in this case the BBC, to have a walk around and decide where all the cameras are going to go and if there are any 'seat kills' needed to make sure people who have bought a ticket don't have any kind of problem watching the match. Then, from that point onwards, it's very much giving the BBC as much detail as and when plans progress, so where teams will stand when they walk out of the tunnel, what time teams will come out, and those kind of things, so they can plan their schedules and their running orders appropriately.

Take us through a typical live event day...

On the day, we will have hopefully done the majority of the planning. And it's a case of just making sure we're on-site whenever the broadcaster is, and that's normally six or seven hours ahead of the kick-off time. So, it will be early morning for the 3pm kick-off. When the teams arrive, we're into the business side of things. We're responsible for ensuring press officers are aware that managers need to do an interview that will go out in the BBC coverage. And then after that, it's ensuring BBC are clear from their position so we can kick off on time.

We are responsible for all the post-match interviews and that's the adrenaline and hectic side of it, as it's so time sensitive. So, it's getting all of these players and managers in and out of these interview positions as quickly as possible.





How big is the team to deliver an event like this?

You're looking at around one or two people managing large numbers of people. I oversee the broadcast manager. With an event like this, delivering a match on TV, it's a fun one. The BBC is probably going to bring close to 100 people on-site depending on whether or not they're doing remote production or not.

What are the biggest challenges you face when planning to cover an event such as this?

I think the challenge is just making sure everyone knows what's needed. I always say the more information we share the better. Absolutely every game brings a different challenge. Sometimes it could be that we haven't got enough space for the trucks to get in, and we've got to come up with a solution for this. But when you go into a club like Crystal Palace, who are set up for Premier League matches, it's normally ready for broadcast and that makes our life easier.

The demand for coverage of women's football is growing. Has this changed your role or the scope and scale of it?

I've been part of the FA prior to the broadcasting agreement between Sky Sports, the BBC and the Barclays WSL, and prior to England winning the EUROs. Between those two landmark moments, it's changed dramatically. It's in demand. More and more people want the footage, and some of these aren't rights holders, and we deal with these requests. The rights fees are bigger now so there is a bit more pressure, but it's brilliant.

Are you seeing more and more women working in positions like yours in football?

I still think it's male-dominated. But certainly, within women's football, it feels like there's a shift change and there are more women working across football as a whole.

We work with lots of women in the industry and all of them are brilliant at what they do, but there's still a lack of women in sports production, I would say.

Tell us about your path to this role, and how you got the job? What qualities do you need?

I didn't know what I wanted to do at school, and I went to a careers fair where Garth Crooks, a BBC presenter, was hosting a roadshow, so we got to present the BBC Sports News. I just don't know what it was, but it just inspired me.

Then I went to college and did a BTEC National Diploma in media, which, again, was slightly frowned upon – not doing A levels – but it felt like the right thing to do. I went to university and studied television production. I did work experience through my degree and that was when I really realised I wanted to work in this.

I did some stints at BBC Radio 5 Live, and I now work with people who I was doing work placements for when I was just 16. It's really crazy to think that it has come full circle. Then, from university, I got into Sky Sports and worked in Sky Sports Cricket for five and a half years.

I really enjoy working at the FA and pushing women's football forwards in the broadcast landscape. If I could've written an ideal job specification, it would've been this one!

What's the most memorable event you've covered so far?

The Lionesses v USA... there were nearly 77,000 fans there. It really made you feel like all the hard work was worth it. Another that I can't dismiss was the first BWSL match of the new broadcast deal with Sky Sports. I think seeing the reaction of that first broadcast, with all the analysis... It was something I'd always wanted as a kid.

