

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**





**"THIS IS  
EXACTLY WHERE  
WE WANT TO BE,  
CHALLENGING  
IN EVERY  
COMPETITION  
AND AT THE  
BUSINESS END  
OF THE SEASON"**

# NIAMH CHARLES

GOALS WIN GAMES SAYS DEFENDER **NIAMH CHARLES** AND CHELSEA'S HOT RUN OF FORM CAN ONLY STAND THEM IN GOOD STEAD FOR TODAY'S FINAL Interview **ABBIE INGHAM**

**T**here is a record crowd expected at Selhurst Park today with over 20,000 tickets sold, beating the previous record at last year's Final. Is this something your younger self could've ever imagined?

I think it's really exciting, and it's just a credit to the growth of the English game. I think that when you probably look at last year's Continental Tyres Cup Final and the growth of the game since, hopefully the crowd will be amazing. So yes, I'm really looking forward to it, and it's something that younger me would have never believed.

**A London derby... considered the BWSL's greatest rivalry. Does the fact that the opposition is Arsenal add any extra pressure to the Final?**

I think no matter who it was against, there would be pressure to win. Obviously, there's been a great history between Chelsea and Arsenal in finals, but in any game, it's always so competitive with the rivalry and the quality of the two teams as well. So, I think, not that there's extra pressure, but we know it's going to be a really difficult game and you know the quality they've got. We'll be ready for a very tough match.

**You got the better of Arsenal on Sunday with a 2-0 win in the fifth round of the Vitality Women's FA Cup. Do you think you've learned anything from the victory that will help you this weekend?**

I think it's always strange in football when you play the same team back-to-back. But we already know a lot about Arsenal. They know a lot about us. We've already played them twice this year so far. I think the last game was a bit of a strange one in the fact that everyone came off the international break. Everyone was tired. It probably wasn't the most usual build-up to a game. But I think both teams dealt with that. So, I think on Sunday, you'll probably see both teams having had a week to prepare, and maybe set up a little bit better. But absolutely, we know that they're a top-quality team and we've got to be on top of our game to try and beat them.

It's a chance for the first trophy of the domestic season. You are entering this Final top of the BWSL, into the quarter-finals of both the UWCL and FA Cup. Is there any talk of a quadruple in the dressing room?

There's not. I think, day-to-day, it's just doing the best you can in that moment. To be able to compete on all those fronts, you have to break it down into the next game, the next training session, and the next match is always the most important thing. Obviously, this is exactly where we want to be, challenging in every competition and in the business end of the season. But I think we just break it down. We know we've got a tough run of games now but it's just the next one, the next one, and the next one. And it's great to keep focused, and not look too far ahead.

**Chelsea have enjoyed great success in the Continental Cup in recent seasons - with the chance for a third title in just four years. Do you think this tournament has a special place in the heart of your club?**

Yes, over the last few years, last year aside, we've been really successful in this competition. We want to win everything but it's always nice to get to this Final so early in the season. We've had some great memories in the Continental Cup. Certainly, I have. So anytime you get to play in a final and have the opportunity to win any trophy, I think it's a privilege, but this one particularly is exciting.

**On the way to the Final, Chelsea have scored ten goals in two games. Do you believe that efficiency in front of goal has been the key to your success?**

I mean goals win games at the end of the day, but I think ▶





we've done quite well this year in being clinical in front of goal. When we're getting opportunities, we're taking them. That's something that we can pride ourselves on. Not only are we trying to keep clean sheets, but even against the top opposition, where you don't get as many opportunities, we're looking to be really clinical and ruthless. It's something the forwards work really hard on in training, and also the whole team in terms of being able to create those chances and being on the same page. So hopefully, we can take that into Sunday.

**You're on a great run of form – with a sensational 7-0 win over West Ham to book your place in the Final – that's now over 20 games unbeaten in all competitions. Are you going into this game expecting to win?**

I don't think there's any expectation. We just focus on what we can control, which is the practicality of the game plan, implementing it, and being in the best position individually and as a team. I think we've got good momentum, but equally we have massive respect for Arsenal. And I think it's a credit to the women's game that anyone can beat anyone on a given day. So, we'll absolutely not have any complacency, and we'll know we'll have to completely earn it.

**You're capable of playing in many positions – a natural winger now playing as full-back. Do you**

**think that your versatility makes you extremely valuable to this Chelsea side?**

I try to use it to my strength, and to my advantage, to be able to offer that to the team. It gives me a better opportunity of getting on the pitch and playing. So, I guess it has helped me. I think everyone has a role to play in the team, and if that's my role, then I'll do it to the absolute best of my ability no matter where I'm asked to play. Also, it's quite fun when you change every now and again. But it's also nice to have a home, a position you're really working on to try and become the best you can possibly be. I think we all know our roles in this team and whatever any player can do to help. We're all ready to muck in and help out.

**What would it mean to you to be the difference in the Final?**

I mean it would be great if it was me, and it would honestly be an unbelievable feeling, but as long as Chelsea come out on top we're a team. At the end of the day, whoever makes the difference, we all work together. As long as the team wins, I think that's the most important thing.



**"WE ALL KNOW OUR ROLES IN THIS TEAM. WE'RE ALL READY TO MUCK IN AND HELP OUT"**