

Sports science

Should women's football have different rules from men's?

Women are not just smaller men

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A LITTLE BOY, face covered in red and white paint (and a dab of ketchup) screams with delight when England equalise with Colombia in their quarter-final match. Stadium Australia, just outside Sydney, is packed. Your correspondent is rubbing shoulders with England fans in white and red, Colombian ones in yellow and Australians giddy from their team's earlier victory over France.

The [women's football World Cup](#), held this year in Australia and New Zealand, is setting records. England eventually beat Colombia, and then Australia, to set up a final against Spain on August 20th. Attendance at the tournament is over 1.8m, up from 2015's record of 1.4m. TV viewership across all matches is set to pass 2bn, double the previous high point.

Much of the coverage has compared the women's game with the men's. One striking advert tries to dispel the idea that the women's game is less skilful.