

# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## WOMEN'S FOOTBALL 1-0 MISOGYNY

Coach John reports on a **tumultuous** and historic summer for Women's football in Spain.



The scandal which **engulfed** the Royal Spanish Football Association, has shone a light on the deep misogyny at the heart of the system. The kiss on the lips that Luis Rubiales, president of the Spanish Football Federation, forced on Jenni Hermoso at the trophy ceremony was a disgusting example of the sexual harassment that most, if not all, women suffer at some point in their lives – whether in the workplace or on the streets.

His **crotch-grabbing** as the full time whistle blew at the World Cup Final, again shows the machismo and demeaning behaviour that many women and gender non-conforming people face in the workplace and wider society.

If Rubiales believes that he can **get away with** this when millions of people are watching, what does he do in private? More than 80 current and ex Spanish football players signed a statement saying that they would not return to play for the national team as long as the leadership remained in place. This potentially shows the power of collective action, in what

was basically an unofficial strike by these women players.

All 11 members of the Spanish national team's coaching staff **resigned** in protest – coach Vilda, and Rubiales were eventually **forced out** due to public pressure and the collection action and solidarity of the victorious Spanish women's football team.

Politics in sports are a reflection of debates in wider society, and the high-profile discussion and actions for LGBTQ equality and women's rights in sports can contribute to further organising.

Rubiales' actions are unfortunately not uncommon, they're a widespread issue, the reflection of a system which **breeds** oppression and exploitation, and which allows powerful men to believe that they're invincible and can **get away with** anything.

Women's football may have won great victories on and off the pitch, but the struggle continues. At the recent international against Sweden the players made their feelings clear when they posed with **clenched fists** behind a banner proclaiming: “#SeAcabó - Our fight is the global fight.” They have pledged to **clean out** ‘Rubialismo’ from the game.

Adapted from the article by Sara Guardiola

### Sexual harassment in football

by ECP coach



**John Hird**

## Word list

**tumultuous:** filled with disorder and disturbance

**engulfed:** to overwhelm or envelop completely

**crotch:** the part of trousers, panties, etc., where the two legs or panels join.

**to grab:** to seize suddenly, eagerly, or roughly

**to get away with:** to do something without punishment

**resigned:** to give up an office or position:

**forced out:** to be expelled or sacked

**breeds:** to give rise to, cause or produce

**clenched:** to close (the hands, etc.) tightly

**fist:** the hand closed tightly with the fingers doubled into the palm

**clean out:** to completely remove unwanted things and/or people from a room or institution

## Let's chat about that!

1. Give a summary of the text to your coach and/or classmates.
2. Did you watch the World Cup final?
3. In your own words explain what happened after Spain won? What did Rubiales do?
4. Did you expect such a reaction? Why/Why not?
5. What other things do powerful men think they can get away with?
6. What do the Spanish players mean when they talk about the 'Global fight'?
7. What other institutions need to be 'cleaned out' of misogynists? How can it be done?

## SEXISM IN THE CLASSROOM - Discuss these common sayings and phrases



**“Boys will be boys.”** Nothing about misogyny is inevitable. Suggesting that sexist behaviour from men and boys is natural serves no one and harms everyone, regardless of gender. We shouldn't excuse or normalise it. Boys and men are capable of change. We must end this toxic culture and treat girls and women with respect.

**“She's asking for it dressed like that.”** Too often, women and girls are blamed for the sexual assault and crimes committed against them. Everything from the clothes they wear, to the fact that they are out at night time is scrutinised. Let's be clear: the only person responsible for sexual assault is the perpetrator. Don't play into this culture of victim blaming. Call it out.

**“My ex-girlfriend is crazy.”** Saying a woman is “crazy” is a way of discrediting them and undermining their reactions or feelings. It can also be a form of controlling behaviour because it questions someone's reality and influences others into perceiving them as unreliable or unreasonable.

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