

**"If you bring the product to the show, we've proven people will come out and support it."**

Australia women's national football team captain  
**SAM KERR**



A LOOK BACK AT 2023



# WOMEN'S SPORTS SOAR

**KHALID HOSSAIN**

Women have been active participants in formal sports competitions for nearly as long as their male counterparts have been, yet their journey for recognition and equity in sports has been a protracted and challenging one. This struggle extends beyond the realms of women's cricket and football, encompassing various disciplines.

Despite the prevalence of men's sporting events throughout the year, The Daily Star asserts that the noteworthy achievements in the women's circuit during 2023 have set the stage for reshaping perceptions of the overall sporting landscape.

The success of the FIFA Women's World Cup played the role of a catalyst in making the year a significant period for women's



event, accumulating an impressive 192 million hours of viewership.

**Tennis triumph: Coco Gauff steals the show**

The US Open witnessed a historic moment with Coco Gauff's victory, not only showcasing her exceptional on-court skills but also drawing record-breaking viewership. Over 3.4 million viewers tuned in to ESPN, surpassing the viewership for the men's final – in which Novak Djokovic pulled off a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title – by over a million.

Gauff's win, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Sexes match in 1973, underscored the five decades of equal prize money for male and female players at the tournament.

**A glimpse into the future**

Consulting firm Deloitte's November report projected a significant surge in revenue from elite women's sports, estimating a 300 percent increase from its 2021 forecast, exceeding \$1 billion in 2024. Jennifer Haskel, insights lead for Deloitte's Sports Business Group, attributed this growth to exceptional progress in women's sports globally, attracting heightened interest from investors.

It is anticipated that for the first time, there will be equal numbers of female and male athletes in the Paris Summer Olympics in 2024. However, amidst the triumphs, the year illuminated areas requiring improvement. While the journey toward a level playing field remains a marathon, the trends indicate a potential turning point for women in sports, poised for transformative change.

**The International Cricket Council (ICC) made history by declaring equal prize money for both men's and women's teams at ICC events.**

sports, surpassing expectations in terms of attendance, viewership, and revenue, contributing to the growing influence and popularity of women in the sports arena. Let's revisit the cream of the crop from a stellar year.



**Football fever Down Under**

Australia and New Zealand jointly hosted the Women's World Cup from July 20 to August 20, captivating audiences and setting remarkable benchmarks. Boasting nearly a whopping 10,000 fans more per game than the 2019 tournament in France, the event stood as a resounding triumph.

However, the joyous atmosphere was tempered by Spain's post-victory controversies. Spanish soccer federation president Luis Rubiales forcibly kissing Jenny Hermoso during the medal ceremony led to his eventual resignation. A week prior to this, head coach Jorge Vilda was fired amid outrage for having fostered a toxic environment for players.

Vilda, however, quickly found a new opportunity with the Moroccan Football Federation – which has been lauded for its investments in women's sports – shedding light on the need to address the prevalent male-dominated decision-making landscape in sports governing bodies.

**All time attendance record set in unlikely event**

In an unexpected twist, a college volleyball event in Nebraska in August drew an astonishing 92,003 attendees, surpassing the previous world record set during a UEFA Champions League football game between Barcelona and Wolfsburg in 2022.

**Cricket leads the strides in gender equality**

Cricket took centre stage in 2023 as a trailblazer for gender equality. ICC made history by declaring equal prize money for both men's and women's teams.

ICC Chairman Greg Barclay hailed this decision as a pivotal step forward. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) echoed this sentiment, ensuring that England's women cricketers would receive equal match fees as their male counterparts.

The Women's ICC T20 World Cup in South Africa further solidified its standing as the most watched women's cricket

Stars we lost



**Gianluca Vialli**  
Footballer, Italy  
(9 July 1964-6 January 2023)



**John Motson**  
Pundit, England  
(10 July 1945-23 February 2023)



**Just Fontaine**  
Footballer, France  
(18 August 1933-28 February 2023)



**Antonio Carbajal**  
Footballer, Mexico  
(7 June 1929-9 May 2023)



**Jim Hines**  
Sprinter, USA  
(10 September 1946-3 June 2023)



**Luis Suarez**  
Footballer, Spain  
(2 May 1935-9 July 2023)



**Heath Streak**  
Cricketer, Zimbabwe  
(16 March 1974-3 September 2023)



**Sir Bobby Charlton**  
Footballer, England  
(11 October 1937-21 October 2023)



**Bishan Singh Bedi**  
Cricketer, India  
(25 September 1946-23 October 2023)



**Terry Venables**  
Coach, England  
(6 January 1943-25 November 2023)

## The ones who shaped sporting landscapes



Australia's Glenn Maxwell's Herculean 200 not out against Afghanistan will remain one of the most iconic innings, not just of 2023 World Cup but of all time.



Following two unhappy years in Paris, Lionel Messi found joy with Inter Miami in MLS and gave back people's adoration with mesmerising performances.



LeBron James became NBA's all-time leading scorer on February 7 this year, breaking Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's record of 38,387 points.



Spanish football federation chief Luis Rubiales's forced kiss on Jenni Hermoso embellished the World Cup winning atmosphere in the Spanish dugout.



Virat Kohli brought up a historic 50th ODI century during the World Cup semifinal against New Zealand, going past legendary Sachin Tendulkar in the process.



Dutch driver Max Verstappen continued his dominance in Formula 1, winning a record 19 out of 22 races this and leading his Red Bull team to 21 out of 22 wins.



Manchester City had a stellar season in club football, winning their first ever Champions League title on way to grabbing five trophies in the calendar year.



Siya Kolisi led South Africa to the successful defence of Rugby World Cup title, beating New Zealand 12-11 for a record-breaking fourth title.