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THE PRIME MINISTER

20 August 2023

To Sarina and all our Lionesses,

On behalf of the entire country, I want to wish you the best of luck against Spain in the World Cup final!

Once again, this summer, you've made us all proud. From beating the Aussies in their own backyard to winning that penalty shoot-out, you have inspired us with your skill, teamwork and courage.

This weekend, like millions of others, I will be watching and cheering you on. But whatever the result, I want you to know that you have already secured a lasting legacy: that every girl in this country will have equal access to all school sport, including football.

When you won the Euros last summer, you could have chosen merely to celebrate an unprecedented achievement. But you saw that success as the beginning of your mission, not the end. For many of you, the honour of putting on that England shirt was earned against the odds. It should never have been like that. At times, some of you were even stopped from playing. But you faced down outdated attitudes and fashioned your own opportunities to play.

So when you walk out with pride to play for England, you are not just making memories that will stay with us as part of our history, you are playing for a different future. It's extraordinary to reflect on how far women's football has come through your generation alone. But the full measure of your impact will be found in just how far women's football can grow in the generations that follow.

For my daughters, and for every girl in this country, you have made football something for them; you have made them feel they belong on the pitch. So – in a way – you've already brought football home.

All that remains is to bring the trophy home too - and the whole nation is rooting for you.

Thank you – and good luck!

Ms Sarina Wiegman and the Lionesses