

## BLOG REPORT

# Euros 2025 AI Afterglow: Fuelling The Lionesses' Data Driven Gold Rush



## Empowering the Lionesses' Future Legacy with AI and Data

The UEFA Women's Euro 2025 final win has cemented the England Lionesses' place in sporting history, but it also marks a pivotal moment for their commercial future. This triumph has not only captivated a nation but has ignited a profound shift in fan engagement and commercial potential within women's football. This blog summary outlines a strategic blueprint for the Lionesses to adopt a cutting-edge AI operating model, transforming into an "AI Lionesses Team Ecosystem" designed to deliver unparalleled fan experiences, maximize digital revenue, and secure a lasting impact on the next generation of girl fans in England.

The Lionesses' journey has been extraordinary. The UEFA Women's Euro 2025, for instance, set new benchmarks, drawing an aggregate attendance comfortably surpassing previous tournaments. This on-field prowess has directly translated into significant commercial gains across the Women's Super League and fostered a broader societal impact, with a notable increase in female football participation across the UK.

Their digital footprint has also expanded dramatically, with millions of new followers across social media platforms. For Gen Z and Alpha generations, these platforms are primary touchpoints for connection. The Lionesses are evolving beyond a mere sports team; they are a formidable digital brand. Leveraging this digital momentum through a sophisticated AI operating model is crucial for converting transient interest into enduring, profitable fan relationships and solidifying a lasting legacy.

## The Digital Imperative: Why an AI-Augmented Operating Model is Essential

The sports industry is in the midst of a profound transformation, with data emerging as a vital asset. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the forefront of this revolution, reshaping athlete training, performance optimization, fan experience enhancement, and revenue generation. The global AI in sports market is projected to expand from USD 11 billion in 2025 to approximately USD 61 billion by 2034. This accelerating trend underscores the critical importance of AI adoption.

Effective AI operating models are indispensable for aligning AI capabilities with business objectives and establishing clear accountability for AI-driven outcomes. Failure to embrace an AI-augmented operating model risks falling behind competitors. The Lionesses have a unique opportunity, following their Euros 2025 success, to solidify their position as pioneers in the digital sports landscape, transforming their operational DNA for sustained relevance and commercial success.

## The AI Operating Model: A Framework for Sporting Excellence

To achieve their ambitious goals, the England Lionesses can adopt a sophisticated AI operating model rooted in proven organizational design principles.

### Core Principles: Value-Driven Design & Integrated Elements

A comprehensive framework for organizational design involves understanding how various elements work together to create value. This includes how an organization defines its core **Purpose** and creates a **Value agenda**. It looks at how accountable units and mission teams are structured (**Structure**), and how the

organization collaborates with partners (**Ecosystem**). It also examines how **Leadership** makes decisions and catalyzes action, and how to set priorities, allocate resources, and manage performance (**Governance**). Crucially, it considers how workflows are designed (**Processes**), how digital, data, cybersecurity and AI enable value creation (**Technology**), how **Behaviors** are nurtured across the organization, and how people are **Rewarded** for performance. Finally, it addresses how the organization locates and deploys talent (**Footprint**) and how it attracts and develops **Talent**. These elements are designed to work in concert, aligning resources and accountabilities with strategic priorities, fostering clarity, speed, future-ready skills, and commitment.

A critical understanding emerges: **successful AI adoption is disproportionately dependent on non-technical factors**. While algorithms and infrastructure are important, a substantial 70% of AI success comes from people, processes, and cultural transformation. This indicates that the Lionesses' long-term success will hinge on their ability to manage the human and organizational aspects of this transformation, necessitating strong leadership buy-in, strategic talent development, fostering adaptive cultural shifts, and implementing agile processes that enable human-AI collaboration.

AI's transformative impact extends across all these organizational elements, facilitating proactive strategic planning, reshaping traditional hierarchies, and allowing for targeted skills development.

## **Adapting the Model for the AI Lionesses Team: People, Processes, Technology, Data**

A successful AI operating model for the Lionesses necessitates the thoughtful integration of four core aspects:

- **People:** Prioritizing **talent acquisition and development** for AI professionals (technical expertise + soft skills), fostering **continuous learning** through training and conferences, building **AI literacy across the organization** to encourage cross-functional collaboration, and implementing **retention strategies**. Crucially, AI's role is to *augment* human ingenuity, empowering staff to be more creative and strategic. Empowering key digital-data-AI leadership roles and ensuring AI literacy in the boardroom is critical for success.
- **Processes:** Establishing clear **AI Governance** for ethical and responsible use, adopting an **Agile Methodology** for experimentation and learning, implementing **Continuous Improvement** through real-time monitoring, and developing robust **Change Management** strategies.
- **Technology:** Leveraging **Digital and Data Deployment** to increase productivity and drive new value, deploying **Agentic AI** for accelerated execution and personalization, and ensuring vital **Technical Considerations** like low-latency inference, fine-tuning, and scalable multi-agent orchestration. Vendor neutrality and open standards are preferred.
- **Cybersecurity:** **Threat-based insights, risk-based cybersecurity operations** and effective **Secure Access Service Edge (SASE)** frameworks..
- **Data:** Implementing an effective **Data Strategy** and **Data Operating Model** for **Data Quality** (accuracy, completeness, consistency), creating frameworks for **Accessibility** to authorized personnel while promoting data sharing, and establishing robust **Security** measures to protect sensitive information and comply with regulations.

## The Agentic AI Advantage: Accelerating Execution and Adaptability

Agentic AI represents a significant leap, fundamentally transforming processes. It accelerates execution by eliminating delays and enabling parallel processing. It introduces unparalleled adaptability by continuously ingesting data and dynamically adjusting process flows. Furthermore, it enables deep personalization by tailoring interactions to individual profiles.

Key design principles for agentic AI include Composability, Distributed Intelligence, Layered Decoupling, Vendor Neutrality, and Governed Autonomy. This means the Lionesses' AI ecosystem will be a continuously learning, evolving, and self-optimizing entity, requiring a shift from rigid planning to continuous experimentation and dynamic adaptation, all while operating within predefined ethical and strategic boundaries. The Lionesses should design their AI ecosystem with built-in feedback loops and cultivate a strong culture of continuous learning and adaptation, coupled with a robust ethical AI framework.

## Unlocking Unrivalled Fan Engagement and Immersive Experiences

The modern sports landscape demands a sophisticated approach to fan engagement, particularly for the digitally native Gen Z and Alpha generations, who expect interactivity and personalization.

### Understanding the Modern Fan: Engaging Gen Z and Alpha Generations

Gen Z and Alpha primarily engage with sports content through social media platforms and are willing to pay for richer, personalized mobile services. An effective fan engagement strategy yields increased loyalty, enhanced experience, amplified brand awareness, increased revenue, and valuable fan insights.

Modern fans are not passive consumers; they actively seek participation. The shift from a traditional broadcast model to a "participation economy" implies co-creating experiences with fans. This necessitates fostering a strong sense of community, providing avenues for fan expression, and granting fans a sense of agency. The Lionesses should actively explore and implement mechanisms for **fan-generated content**, interactive polls, and dedicated digital platforms that facilitate direct fan-to-fan and fan-to-team interactions.

### AI-Powered Personalization: Tailoring the Fan Journey for Deep Connection

AI empowers hyper-personalized content, promotions, and experiences, including smarter event recommendations, targeted messaging, and predictive offers. Advanced AI algorithms can analyze live match footage to detect key moments and automatically generate highlight reels curated to individual preferences. The industry anticipates significant growth in AI-powered fan segmentation, content creation, and personalization, signaling a rapid evolution towards "segment of one" engagement.

This level of individualized personalization fosters a stronger emotional bond and significantly increases customer lifetime value (CLV). The Lionesses should invest in a robust fan data platform, such as a **Customer Data Platform (CDP)**, to aggregate and analyze fan data from all touchpoints, enabling highly targeted engagement strategies that drive deeper loyalty and monetisation.

## Digital Immersive Experiences: AR/VR, Second-Screen, and Interactive Content

The global live entertainment market, encompassing sports, is projected for substantial growth, driven by consumer demand for immersive, real-time experiences. **Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR)** technologies enable innovative fan experiences, including virtual game viewing from home.

Enhancing game access through live streaming and second-screen experiences (e.g., behind-the-scenes footage, exclusive interviews) significantly boosts engagement. AI-enabled smart venues can leverage AI-powered digital signage for personalized updates and offers, and virtual concierges can provide real-time assistance.

A key observation is the need to bridge the physical and digital divide in fan experience. The most successful strategy will treat these as interconnected components of a unified, seamless "phygital" (physical + digital) fan journey. Immersive technologies, particularly AR/VR, have the unique potential to bridge this divide, allowing fans at home to feel a deeper sense of presence and providing in-stadium attendees with exclusive digital content. The Lionesses should develop a comprehensive "phygital" strategy for seamless transitions and consistent engagement across all touchpoints.

## Case Study: The Potential of IRCODE for Interactive Fan Engagement

**IRCODE** represents an innovative "EXACT MATCH technology" that transforms any image or video into a digital destination. Unlike traditional QR codes, IRCODE allows users to simply point their camera at any visual (e.g., a poster, a TV screen, merchandise) to instantly access interactive content, shop, or engage, without altering the original image. It offers real-time utility, mobile optimization, powerful analytics, and seamless social media integration.

IRCODE creates an "invisible digital layer" for ubiquitous engagement, fundamentally changing the paradigm of digital interaction. Any visual associated with the Lionesses – whether on a player's jersey, a stadium billboard, a TV broadcast, or a social media post – can become an instant, intuitive gateway to exclusive content, merchandise, or immersive experiences. This significantly lowers the barrier to entry for engagement and transforms passive viewing into active, data-rich interaction. The Lionesses should strategically pilot IRCODE across diverse fan touchpoints to create a pervasive interactive fan ecosystem and gather invaluable behavioral data.

## Maximizing Digital Revenue Monetisation: The Business Case

The Lionesses' success has created a significant opportunity to capitalize on digital revenue streams, moving beyond traditional models to embrace innovative, AI-driven monetisation strategies. The women's football market is experiencing explosive growth, with UEFA budgeting for €128 million in revenue from Euro 2025 alone – double the 2022 figure. Deloitte predicts women's sports revenue to surpass USD 2.35 billion in 2025, a remarkable 240% increase over four years, with football leading the charge. This growth is driven by increasing global interest, expanded broadcast deals, and a distinct, highly engaged fanbase.

## 1. Enhanced Sponsorship and Advertising Revenue

- **Data-Driven Sponsorship Activations:** AI enables the Lionesses to offer sponsors targeted campaigns based on granular fan data. By analyzing demographics, preferences, and engagement patterns, they can demonstrate clear ROI for sponsors, leading to more lucrative and long-term partnerships. The distinct product preferences of women's football fans open doors for unique brand associations.
- **Increased Brand Value and Association:** The Lionesses' commitment to digital innovation and their positive societal impact make them an incredibly attractive brand for corporate partners. Their strong community presence and values-driven approach bolster their brand reputation, attracting premium sponsors. Endorsement values for Lionesses players are already skyrocketing, with estimates of a 30-50% increase in the next 12-24 months post-Euro 2025.
- **Optimized Ad Placement and Content Monetisation:** AI can analyze content consumption to optimize ad placement within digital experiences (in-app, streaming, AR/VR). AI-curated highlight reels create more engaging content, attracting higher advertising rates and opening new ad revenue streams. Owning their video experience on dedicated platforms allows for interactive elements and first-party data collection, further enhancing ad value.

## 2. Direct-to-Fan Monetisation through Personalized Experiences

- **Subscription Models for Premium Content:** Leveraging AI-powered personalization, the Lionesses can offer tiered subscription models for exclusive content, such as behind-the-scenes documentaries, tactical analysis, personalized training insights, or early merchandise access. AI can identify content appeal for different segments, enabling dynamic pricing and bundles.
- **Enhanced E-commerce and Merchandise Sales:** AI can drive hyper-personalized merchandise recommendations based on Browse history, favorite players, and social media sentiment. IRCODE can revolutionize this by allowing instant purchases or content access by simply scanning a player's jersey on screen, reducing friction and capturing impulse buys.
- **Virtual Ticketing and Immersive Event Revenue:** As AR/VR become more accessible, the Lionesses can sell "virtual tickets" for immersive game viewing, expanding reach and creating new revenue streams. AI-enabled smart venues can also drive in-stadium spending through personalized deals and virtual concierges.
- **Gamification and Interactive Challenges:** Integrating gamified experiences, such as sponsored prediction games or fantasy leagues, can drive engagement and offer monetisation opportunities through rewards like discounted tickets or VIP experiences. These activities provide valuable data for further personalization.
- **Digital Collectibles and NFTs:** The emerging market for digital collectibles offers a unique revenue avenue. AI can help identify valuable moments or player achievements that can be tokenized and sold as exclusive digital assets, appealing to a tech-savvy fanbase.

## 3. Data as a Monetizable Asset

- **First-Party Data for Strategic Insights:** Building an owned digital ecosystem allows the Lionesses to collect rich first-party data on fan behaviors, preferences, and demographics. This data is invaluable for optimizing their own operations and creating highly targeted offerings for sponsors. Owned digital platforms generate significantly more revenue than social media activities, largely due to this data leverage.
- **Insights for Product Development:** Analyzing fan data can inform the development of new products and services, from bespoke merchandise to unique digital experiences, ensuring offerings

align with fan demand.

- **Predictive Analytics for Future Growth:** AI-driven predictive analytics can forecast future trends in fan engagement and commercial opportunities, allowing proactive adaptation of strategies and investments to maximize long-term revenue growth, including identifying emerging fan segments.

#### 4. Increased Fan Lifetime Value (CLV)

- **Deepening Emotional Connection:** Hyper-personalization and immersive experiences foster a deeper emotional connection, leading to increased loyalty, higher engagement, and a greater willingness to spend on tickets, merchandise, and digital content.
- **Reduced Churn and Increased Retention:** Continuous, personalized engagement through AI-driven platforms helps maintain fan interest beyond match days, reducing churn and increasing the lifetime value of each fan. Loyalty programs, incentivized by AI-driven insights, can further enhance retention through tailored rewards.

In essence, the business case for the Lionesses' digital shift with an AI operating model is rooted in the immense, untapped commercial potential of women's football and the transformative power of AI to unlock it. By embracing personalization, immersive experiences, and data-driven strategies, the Lionesses can not only deepen their connection with their fanbase but also establish themselves as a leading digital brand, generating significant and sustainable revenue for years to come.

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