

VEDANTA WOMEN'S LEAGUE: A PATHWAY FOR SUCCESS

The 8th edition of the Vedanta Women's League is set to be launched on 22 Nov 24. The elite football league for women in Goa will feature six teams. Since its inception in 2017, the League has become a cornerstone in the development of women's football in Goa, providing a platform for aspiring female athletes to showcase their talent and pursue their dreams of playing for India.

Over 1100 women football players have so far found a platform in the VWL and an opportunity to give wings to their football dreams. The success of the League is evident in the composition of Goa's State teams for women, with nearly every player being affiliated to a participating team at the VWL. This achievement reflects the League's role as a catalyst for change, and transformation in Goan football. A ripple effect of the League has also been felt at the age-group level in Goa where more girls are participating and looking to break into the VWL. Over the years, the League has produced some outstanding players such as Karishma, Michael, & Akshita who have gone on to excel at the state, national and international stages.

The VWL had been launched in 2017 with ----- teams and has now expanded to a six team league. In 2023-24, FC Tuem had been crowned Champions and had an unbeaten run in the League, powered by the League leading goal scorer Karen Estrocia. Vintage 73 were Runner-Up and debutants Sesa Football Academy finished third. Stessi Cardozo of Vintage 73 FC was adjudged the 'Best Player of the League', Jenny Silva of SFA the 'Best Defender', & Pearl Fernandes from Sinquerim FC was identified as the 'Emerging Player of the League. The winners of the previous years have been Churchill Brothers (2022), Sirvodem SC (2021), Bidesh XI (2019) & Panjim Footballers (2017 & 2018). This year, there are 6 teams participating in the league, namely, Sesa Football Academy Guardian Angels SC, Maina SC, Calangute Association, Maina Sports Club, Patrong Sports Club, Livvals Sports Association.

Speaking on the development, Ms Leena Verenkar, Head CSR, Sesa Goa, said " We are extremely delighted to partner Goa Football Association in hosting the 8th edition of the VWL. We have been associated with the elite League since 2017 and it is extremely satisfying to see the progress made over the years. Despite various challenges, we, at Vedanta Sesa Goa, are committed to supporting the sporting aspiration of the youth of Goa and especially focused on providing girls a pathway for realising their dreams. Through the VWL we hope to serve the communities in Goa and to help develop the sport in the State as also provide a pipeline of players who can represent the Nation at elite levels.

Beyond the League, Vedanta Sesa Goa has introduced numerous initiatives to support and develop female footballers. These include operating a football centre each at Amona & Bicholim, two football centres, organizing the Vedanta U-15 Tournament for girls, and fielding its first-ever senior women's team in 2023, which will continue to compete this year. Vedanta also runs technical training courses for women at Sesa Technical School (STS), along with specialized computer courses. Additionally, Vedanta's entrepreneurial training initiatives, including the Vedanta Tailoring Training Centre and Project Gram Nirmaan in Goa, have empowered approximately 10,000 women across five states.

A notable achievement for Vedanta Sesa Goa is the recent recognition of the Sesa Football Academy (SFA) with a prestigious 3-star rating in the AIFF Academy Accreditation 2024-25. One of only 15 academies in India to receive this honor and the only one in Goa, SFA currently supports seven age-group teams, ensuring a pipeline of skilled players ready to represent the state and the nation. SFA also strengthens Goa's football ecosystem through initiatives like the Youth Cup, the Veterans' Cup, and AIFF & Asian Football Confederation-approved coaching courses.

The 8th edition of the Vedanta Women's League aims to set new benchmarks of success, inspiring athletes to aim higher and dream bigger.