

The Women's Friendly Tournament co-hosted in Gibraltar by the GFA got off to a great start as Everton Ladies and Los Angeles-based Salsa provided an entertaining although somewhat one-sided encounter. Everton were to show that they were very much the favorites as they took an early lead, taking the match with a 6-0 victory. However, the US ladies were by no means pushovers. Only having arrived from the US the night before at 3pm their coach had the Salsa squad undergoing some intense training under the sun. This seemed to be a way of taking the jetlag off the legs of the players before the 8pm kick-off against Everton.

The English first division side, who were missing some of their Under 20s due to commitments with England's U20 were themselves nothing short of impressive during the warm up as they delivered a somewhat

tough session just before the match. Something not even seen sometimes in men's football in Gibraltar.

The match was to produce some stunning goals from Everton who methodically ploughed their way to Salsa's goal with some exquisite first time passing and control before putting the ball to the middle for the first. The second not coming to long later as a cracker was whipped to the far top corner with Salsas keeper unable to do much about it. This was women's football at top level, something which many local female players watching acknowledged that were not accustomed to seeing.

Salsa were kept in the game by their keeper who provided a string of excellent saves which led to applause from the small crowd attending as she was substituted in the second half. Although trying to break Everton's control of posses-

sion with quick counters, Salsa found themselves on the backheel throughout big parts of the match. Having started well with the first two chances in the match, Salsa found themselves defending more than attacking at times.

Everton demonstrated their effectiveness in attack and control of the midfield to stamp their authority on the match. Tired legs from Salsa were however not a deterrent for them as they continued until the very last minute of the match trying to get a consolation goal.

The match, attended by Minister for Sport Steven Linares, GFA General Secretary Dennis Beiso and some of the 32 females players who had played in the GFA futsal tournament just minutes before also saw a handful of local Everton fans turn up.

As had been expected the match highlighted the high level of football within what is now be-

coming a semi-professional/professional level of football for women in some of the top leagues. It also provided local female football enthusiasts a chance to watch some of the top talents in the game. The tournament itself brings some 25 international players across the six teams participating. Everton themselves were missing five players who had joined the U20 England team and had only days before between champions South Korea. Clubs such as Atletico Madrid and Real Betis have also brought with them some of the U19 Spanish Euro Champions. The tournament will boast of internationals from across Spain, England, France, Japan, Chile and Argentina.

Athletico Madrid, who were playing last night, and who today play Everton, have themselves only just returned from winning a trophy in Columbia. Another of the top teams in the

tournament Paris, who play their matches in La Linea, but are among the favorites to reach the semi-finals also bring with them a large number of international players.

Speaking prior to the start of the tournament organisers highlighted how this was a rare opportunity to watch top level international club women's football. Although there are numerous international national tournaments, the women's club scene does not have many opportunities to participate in international club tournaments of this type globally. The launch of the International Friendly tournament was seen as a perfect opportunity to bring the game into the region where organisers highlighted that the facilities, hotels and even ease of travel with airports close by, including Gibraltar's own with a link to the UK made it a "perfect location" to host the event.

