



Northumbria's i2i International Soccer Academy's women's football team

Oct 09, 2025 13:58 BST

International students at Northumbria embark on FA Cup dream

A team of international college students studying at Northumbria University could soon find themselves facing some of the world's best women's footballers after reaching the first round proper of the FA Cup.

Northumbria's [i2i International Soccer Academy](#) team has already beaten three opponents to reach the world-famous competition, and now face Mancunian Unity from the English Women's Football League on Sunday, October 26th. Victory would put them just two wins away from a potential

dream tie against England's top-flight Women's Super League sides.

The FA Cup's structure means the students are now only two matches away from facing household names like Manchester United, Arsenal, or Chelsea - clubs featuring England internationals and World Cup stars.

Lead Coach Chris Fairless said: "When we watched the draw it really hit home what we'd achieved. These students came from across the world to study and play football here in the UK - now they're in one of the world's most prestigious competitions in women's football with some of the best players in the world and attracting record crowds and TV audiences. It will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The i2i programme allows talented football players from around the world to study at Northumbria for degrees in subjects like Business, Sports and Engineering, alongside training full-time with UEFA-licensed coaches. The partnership, started in 2021, sees students compete in British University and College Sports (BUCS) and other senior and highly competitive leagues. Qualifying for the Women's FA Cup is clearly an exciting step up. The squad is made up of mainly US and Canadian Students, with two Australians and an English player this season.

If they beat Mancunian Unity, the students will enter the FA Cup second round, where they would be one game away from Women's Championship sides (tier 2). Win that, and they face Women's Super League (WSL) clubs in the fourth round - teams that compete in the Champions League and supply players to national teams worldwide.

"Mancunian Unity is an excellent team so it will be a tough away tie", added Fairless. "But qualifying for this stage has already surpassed anything we achieved before, including winning the county cup last season – and these girls believe they can go further."

Kick off against Mancunian Unity is at 2pm on Sunday October 26th, and will be streamed live on the VEO LIVE app (Search and follow [i2i soccer academy](#))

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact
Head of Corporate Communications (interim)
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



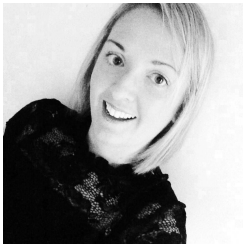
Ruth Lognonne

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

ruth.lognonne@northumbria.ac.uk

07971274253



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk