

# Women's Sport Week – our top players choose their heroes!

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Table Tennis England is backing Women's Sport Week – a new initiative to celebrate women's sport at every level, from the elite to the grassroots.

Backed by the government, National Governing Bodies, Sport England, Women in Sport and major broadcasters, plus leading athletes, Women's Sport Week is about championing women's sport by sharing and signposting people towards positive action and involvement.

We asked three of our leading players to name their female sporting heroes and explain why they draw such inspiration from them. Their choices might surprise you!

## **Commonwealth Games bronze medallist and five-time National Champion Kelly Sibley:**

✘ My sporting idol is Dame Kelly Holmes – she is such an inspiration to women's sport! I remember watching her compete when she won her double gold medal at the Athens Olympics, it was such a fantastic achievement.

I read her biography and I could relate to a couple of her stories, about choosing to live away from home at a young age.

She is also very patriotic and such a fighter who never gives up, and that's why she is my sporting hero.

## **Team England player and Grand Prix champion Karina Le Fevre:**

✘ My female sporting idol is Paula Radcliffe. I believe the achievements she has made in her sport are significant, given how dominated the races tend to be by the Ethiopians/Kenyans.

The extent of her ability can still be seen as her record for marathon still stands, which I think shows how remarkable an achievement it is.

I think her attitude and racing achievements will be an inspiration to many female sportswomen.

## **National Junior Champion Maria Tsaptsinos:**

✘ You can't deny how great Jess Ennis-Hill is and what she has achieved! I've watched her training a couple of times and the dedication and effort she puts in is just admirable.

Aside from her amazing sporting abilities, she has managed to start her own family and persevere with what she dreamed about and not letting her year out of sport stop her from carrying on (no male athlete stops doing what they love to have a family but sporting women have to – we have our own example within table tennis of the Drinkhalls)!

Another way in which Jess Ennis inspires me to be a better athlete is the way she handles the huge amount of pressure that is put upon her by social media. This was very evident for the London 2012 Olympics, where she was the poster girl and everyone was talking about her – but she didn't make any mistakes under the pressure, she kept cool, calm and collected and managed to seal victory – which was fabulous to watch.

Ennis-Hill herself is also a big champion of Women's Sport Week. She said: "For me, Women's Sport Week is about highlighting to all girls and women the benefits of sport.

"Joining clubs and classes to take part in activity can have one of the most positive outcomes in your life. I met the most amazing friends at my first summer camp and they became friends for life.

“Taking part in sport is not about being an elite athlete, but about discovering the physical and mental benefits that come with being active. Most people feel amazing after exercise, even if it is challenging at the time, and an overall sense of wellbeing and self-confidence is worth every minute of the effort!”

[To find out more about Women's Sport Week, click here](#)

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