

21.05.2024 - 15:01 Uhr

DE-Aging technology reunites RACHEL YANKEY OBE WITH HER NINE-YEAR-OLD SELF TO SPARK A debate about confidence

London (ots/PRNewswire) -

Gatorade research REVEALS 40% of teen girls lack confidence in sport*

Today, as the world anticipates the UEFA Women's Champions League Final in Bilbao, Spain, Gatorade research* reveals 40% of teen girls lack confidence in sport, a key driver to the athletes of tomorrow dropping out of sports. As part of its commitment to help 2.5 million teens worldwide access the transformative power of sport by 2030, Gatorade confronts the issue of confidence by unveiling an emotive film where former England footballer, Rachel Yankey OBE, talks confidence with a version of her younger self, created using de-aging technology.

The film addresses issues that impact confidence such as gender inequality in teen football, social media scrutiny on girls, and a lack of female coaches. It captures Yankey meeting her 9-year-old self, who she called Ray. As a child, Yankey cut off her hair, and pretended to be a boy, so she could play football. Yankey admits 'Ray' made her feel 'free', undeterred by challenges like exclusion from boy's teams.

Yankey talks with her younger self, recalling her determination to play football despite male players' objections. The story then unfolds with interviews between Yankey and three young female players from today, each revealing they are treated differently because they play football and talking about the impact on their confidence to stay and play football. Despite there being more girls playing football today than ever before, they are still facing the same issues Yankey did when she was eight years old, in the 1980s.

Speaking about the Rachel Meets Ray film, created by Gatorade, former England Lioness and Arsenal Women's player, Rachel Yankey OBE says, "I want this film to send a message that there is still a long way to go before we have complete equity across football for women and men. Talking to my 9-year-old-self left me speechless and brought home the pride I have in my younger self. Ray made me feel free. She was undeterred by what anybody else thought of her, and I think it was this resilience within myself that I hope I can pass on to today's young footballers."

To make a positive change, Gatorade will bring global legends Rachel Yankey OBE, Laia Aleixandri (current Manchester City and Spain International), and Fernando Llorente (former Athletic Bilbao and Spain International) to talk about how to keep self-esteem and confidence high with the final girls' teams of Gatorade 5v5 tournament at the UEFA's Women's Champion's League finals this weekend in Bilbao.

Gatorade 5v5 is an annual global football tournament for 14-16-year-olds, which promotes equal opportunities for young talent. Now in its seventh year, it continues to inspire and fuel the next generation of athletes, building their confidence and offering unique sporting opportunities. The tournament, unique in structure, includes an all-female contest at the UEFA Women's Champions League Final in Bilbao, Spain.

Since its inception, Gatorade 5v5 tournament has provided over 126,000 young athletes worldwide with positive sporting experiences. This year, 13 countries across Latin America, Asia, Middle East, and Europe will participate across all tournaments, with an estimated 26,000 teenagers - 11,000 more than in 2023.

Speaking about the Rachel Meets Ray film, VP of Marketing at Gatorade, Bart LaCount said, "The Rachel meets Ray film tackles the gender barriers that still exist in football and impact the confidence of girls to play and stay in football. No girl should grow out of her confidence. So, to inspire and motivate teens we will be taking global legends of the game to the 5v5 tournament final in Bilbao, whose role will be to fuel the athletes of tomorrow with confidence."

Visit Gatorade's Confidence Coaches Hub at fueltomorrow.com/ConfidenceCoaches to learn how to keep confidence high and watch the Rachel Meets Ray film.

* In Q1 2024, Gatorade conducted cross-market research which surveyed over 2,500 parents of teens aged 13-17 from Mexico, Colombia, China, Australia and The Philippines. Research undertaken by [Revolt London](https://www.revolt.com).

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