**Programme notes for Sunderland**

This summer I enjoyed watching the Women’s Euros especially those matches featuring our own Reading players. The pride I felt when I saw Mandy Van Den Berg lift the winner’s trophy was tinged with sadness knowing the disappointment inevitably felt by Jo Potter, Jade Moore and Mary Earps who were knocked out in their semi-final against The Netherlands. But therein lies the problem – there can only be one winner.

An enormous amount of training goes into winning the prize and the achievement can never be taken away. But next time someone else will be collecting the trophy and others will fall by the wayside as the competition is played out. The other day I read some words written about training by a man called Paul: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever” (1Corinthians 9 v 25). The crown he is talking about is eternal life, something available to anyone who wants it enough.

Today, however, we are focussing on the game against our northern rivals. Training has been intense and we are ready! Let’s get behind our team to encourage them as they play for the prize of three points. C’mon urzzz!