

# France Sack Head Coach Diacre Four Months Before the Women's World Cup

Four months before the Women's World Cup, France Football Federation has fired head coach Corinne Diacre following an investigation into a "significant divide" between her and her players.

Last month France captain Wendie Renard declared her decision not to play in this summer's tournament until a "significant change" had been made, inspiring Paris Saint-Germain stars Marie-Antoinette Katoto and Kadidiatou Diani to follow suit.

## Renard's boycott

France defender Wendie Renard announced her decision not to play for Les Bleues in Australia and New Zealand following a disagreement with head coach Corinne Diacre. The runner-up world champion, who has 142 caps for France, said she could no longer support the "current system" and that she wanted to protect her mental health.

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But the FFF executive committee quickly ordered a report which concluded that the division between coach and players had reached "a point of no return," with irreversible damage done to French football according to their statement.

Diacre's high profile has not gone uncontested since she joined the national team in 2017. Her disciplinary record had also been called into question by players, with particular criticism directed towards her decision not to include Lyon midfielder Amandine Henry on the roster.

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## Diani's and Katoto's boycott

Four months before the Women's World Cup, France's Football Federation (FFF) sacked head coach Corinne Diacre due to a revolt by several players including captain Wendie Renard and forward duo Kadidiatou Diani and Marie-Antoinette Katoto who boycotted their team in protest over changes not made by the federation.

France are expected to be a strong favorite in Australia and New Zealand, where they will play their Group F opener against Jamaica on July 23. The French federation has promised to investigate the matter thoroughly.

However, the problem goes deeper than just management; club culture was cited as one of the primary reasons for boycotting. Amandine Henry - who scored 29 goals in her final season of

French league play - was excluded from her Euro 2022 squad and Eugenie Le Sommer has expressed her displeasure with how things had been handled.

The boycott is part of a growing movement within women's soccer, with England's Lionesses reportedly wearing purple wristbands at their recent Arnold Clark Cup to demonstrate their support. Canada and Spain have also joined in on this cause online, showing their solidarity for colleagues who are struggling to find adequate resources.

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## **FFF's statement**

On Thursday, the Federation Francaise de Football (FFF) announced that they were sacking head coach Corinne Diacre four months before the Women's World Cup. A review of her work by the FFF's executive committee had revealed "irreversible damage" caused by an ongoing disagreement with senior players, according to a statement released by FFF.

France, who are fifth in the world and set to play Australia's Matildas on April 6th, have suffered a huge setback with so much discontent within their squad that it's uncertain if any of their top stars will return.

The French football federation are expected to interview candidates immediately in order to replace Diacre, with Paris St-Germain Women's coach Gerard Precheur and Saudi Arabia boss Herve Renard both being linked with the job. A swift replacement could be vital for France's chances at the World Cup in July.

## **Diacre's sacking**

Four months before the Women's World Cup, France's football federation has dismissed head coach Corinne Diacre due to a "significant gulf" between her team and players. Diacre had led France since 2017 and was under contract until 2024.

Her tenure has been marked by years of public and private clashes with some of her best players - stars like Eugenie Le Sommer, Amandine Henry and Renard - as well as repeated complaints about her management style.

The FFF acknowledged Diacre's "involvement and seriousness" but noted that a committee appointed by interim president Philippe Diallo unanimously recommended her dismissal. They noted the deep rift that had arisen between players and Diacre, with irreversible dysfunctions apparent.