More football divas love the game

IT started with 31 teams in 2003.

Then, much to the organisers' surprise, numbers went uphill as the years progressed.

From 48 participating teams last year to 56 teams this year, surely Diva La Futbol's annual tournament is an indication of the growing female amateur football scene here.

However, one does not need to possess slick moves or even own the latest soccer boots in the market to take part.

The tournament, which is traditionally five-a-side, only allows one league or professional per team.

This ensures a fair playing field, and certainly enables girls to enjoy a fun-filled and exciting day of soccer with their friends.

The SMU girls have also used Diva as a means of social outreach, bringing girls from various backgrounds together to establish new ties.

Such a cause has successfully provided the younger girls with role models and mentors in the form of fellow players, who can help them improve their game.

Fiona Gao, the president of the organising committee, told The New Paper she was delighted with the response from the female community.

She said: "Besides the increasing number of teams, there is also a growth in the number of Chinese girls taking part this year. In the past, we had more Malays and Indian girls."

"It's probably because football is being widely embraced across the society and everyone is more open to the idea of playing it instead of just watching it."