

# Women in coaching

## Why we need women coaches

sportscotland and the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF) recognises the important role that female coaches play in developing female and male athletes, and their equally important role as role models and mentors.<sup>1</sup> Female coaches can make a big difference in increasing female participation, as well as helping some women to feel more comfortable in a sporting environment, which can be seen as an exclusively male domain. Research has shown that female players who are coached by women perceive less discrimination and are more inclined to enter coaching than those women coached by men.<sup>2</sup>

Female coaches are often influential in the running of a club and, as such, can make a difference to the female side of the sport as well as encouraging other women to become involved in the club in leadership positions. This factsheet looks at some of the current research on women in coaching, including elite women's coaching, and some evidence of good practice. 2006 is the most recent year for which data is available.

## The current picture

- around 631,000 women in the UK (2.5% of all women) were involved in some kind of coaching during 2006, compared with 966,000 men (4.1% of all men)
- women make up 40% of all coaches in the UK, and 34% of all coaches in Scotland
- women account for almost two-fifths of all qualified coaches (38%)
- only 5% of coaches are from black and minority ethnic groups
- of those who are currently coaching, the vast majority of the qualified and paid coaches are of white origin (95% and 98% respectively). In the case of full-time coaches, the data suggests that 100% of coaches are of white origin.<sup>3</sup>

Different types of coach by gender (2006)		
	Men (%)	Women (%)
Individuals who coach	60	40
Qualified coaches	63	37
Full-time coaches	59	42
Paid coaches	38	62

Base: All Adults 16+ years.

Source: TNS Omnibus (General Public Survey), sports coach UK, (2006).

1 Willmann, C and Zipprich, C, (1995) Trainerinnen im Volleyball: Wo sind Sie zu finden? In M-L. Klein (ed.) Karrieren von Mädchen und Frauen im Sport, 2, Tagung der dvs-Kommission Frauenforschung in der Sportwissenschaft vom 24-26.6 1994 in Padenborn, pp.107-42. sankt Augustin: Aademica.

2 Everhart and Chelladurai, (1998).

3 sports coach UK, (2006).



### A gendered style of coaching?

Women who enter the coaching profession often meet with resistance, particularly in sports which traditionally have been very male-dominated. Fasting and Pfister's (2000) research into coaching styles distinguishes between a 'masculine' style versus a 'feminine' style of coaching. It provides a cross-cultural perspective on the gendered world of coaching, and suggests that female players seem to prefer female coaches to male coaches. This is primarily because of their 'feminine' style of coaching which is characterised by empathy, communicative competence and the willingness to cooperate. A 'masculine' coaching style, on the other hand, is defined by aggressiveness, demonstration of power and superiority, and an authoritarian leadership style.

### Elite female coaches

In international sport the higher the performance level of the athlete, the more likely they are to have a male coach.<sup>4</sup> In addition to being fewer in number, female coaches also have less status, lower salaries and less power than their male counterparts.<sup>5</sup>

- the proportion of British female coaches at the Olympics is disproportionately low when compared with the attendance of female athletes. Of the 116 British coaches who went to the 2004 Olympics, 10% were women, compared with 39% female athletes<sup>6</sup>
- of 21 sports, 61% did not include a female coach, compared with 19% of sports that did not have a female participant<sup>7</sup>
- the 2006 Commonwealth Games saw a slight decrease in the proportion of female coaches compared to 2002<sup>8</sup>
- the number of British female athletes in attendance at the 2008 Olympics increased to 46%, compared to 39% in 2004. However, of the 110 British coaches who were in attendance, only 8% were women, a decrease since the 2004 Olympics.<sup>9</sup>

4 Male and Female Coaches – In the eyes of female elite soccer players, Fasting & Pfister, (2000).

5 Opportunity and Work Behaviour in College Coaching, Journal of Sport and Social Issues, Knoppers et al, (1991).

6 UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport, Progress made towards objectives and targets for 2004 and analysis of the current situation, UK Sport, (2005).

## Best practice solutions

### Women into Coaching Programme, Scotland

sportscotland is in the process of developing a pilot programme in five sports aimed at developing and progressing 100 female coaches between 2008 and 2011. The programme will target existing coaches, providing them with a tailored education and support package. The aim is to help these coaches attain higher qualifications and to improve their confidence, making it more likely that they will stay in their posts for longer.

### Women into Coaching, London (2005-2008)

Between January 2005 and December 2006, the WSFF ran a project that trained more than 100 women coaches in London. 'Women into Coaching (WiC) – London' was funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The WSFF was granted a further £440,000 to deliver Women into Coaching 2. The funding was used to give 210 women from across London the opportunity to gain coaching qualifications up to NVQ level 3 in eight sports.

### Women in Higher Level Sports Coaching, North West Partnership (2007-2008)

Having witnessed the success of the 'Women into Coaching – London' project, the North West has been awarded ESF money to develop a similar project for the region, 'Women into Higher Level Sports Coaching – North West'.

The North West Partnership, which includes county sports partnerships, National Governing Bodies, sports coach UK, the WSFF, Centre of Vocational Excellence and SkillsActive, will progress 150 women in eight sports towards a higher coaching qualification.

7 UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport, Progress made towards objectives and targets for 2004 and analysis of the current situation, UK Sport, (2005).

8 UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport, Progress made towards objectives and targets for 2005 and analysis of the current situation, UK Sport, (2006).

9 sportscotland analysis of data from Beijing Olympic Games: Team GB handbook, (2008).



### Sources

Everhart, C.B. and Chelladurai, P. (1998) Gender Difference in Coaching Philosophy: The Case of Female Basketball Teams, *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 60; 2: pp152-8.

Fasting, K. and Pfister, G. (2000) Female and male coaches in the eyes of female elite soccer players. *European Physical Education Review*, 1:1: pp91-107.

Knoppers, A. Myer, B.B., Ewing, M. and Forrest, L. (1989) Gender and Salary of Coaches, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 6: pp348-61.

Willmann, C. and Zipprich, C. (1995) Trainerinnen im Volleyball: Wo sind Sie zu finden? In M-L. Klein (ed.) *Karrieren von Mädchen und Frauen im Sport*, 2, Tagung der dvs-Kommission Frauenforschung in der Sportwissenschaft vom 24-26.6 1994 in Padenborn, pp.107-42. sankt Augustin: Aademica.



## Contact

**sportscotland**  
Caledonia House  
South Gyle  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DQ

Tel 0131 317 7200  
Fax 0131 317 7202

[www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)

The **sportscotland** group is made up of **sportscotland**, **sportscotland** Trust Company (National Centres) and the Scottish Institute of Sport.

## Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation

Third Floor  
Victoria House  
Bloomsbury Square  
London  
WC1B 4SE

Tel 020 7273 1740  
Fax 020 7273 1981

[info@wsff.org.uk](mailto:info@wsff.org.uk)  
[www.wsff.org.uk](http://www.wsff.org.uk)

Registered charity number 1060267

The work of the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation is motivated by our vision of a nation of active women, where sport and exercise is an integral part of everyday life.

**sportscotland** documents are available in a range of formats and languages. Please contact our communications team on 0131 317 7200 for more information.

© **sportscotland** 2008.  
Published by **sportscotland**

ISBN: 978 1 85060 527 0  
WISF4 1108 1M