

# Coaching the Female Athlete

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# LET'S GET ONE THING CLEAR..

## WHAT WE ARE NOT SAYING:

There is only one way to coach females and it has to be different from the way you coach males.

## WHAT WE ARE SAYING:

1. It is important to understand that due to social/cultural/physical differences it may be effective to deal with females in a different manner to males.
2. Preconceived notions about females can lead us to treat them differently when there is no need to.

# SEEN - HEARD - FELT...

## *Examples of common frustrations...*

- Why don't they "go for it"?
- Why are they not getting it?
- Why won't she put her body on the line, she is afraid of contact.
- They won't call each other out - they have to take ownership of this, I can't always be giving out.
- "Get out there and get in her face"
- "Send her into next week"

# Think about these differences...



Physical, aggressive	Struggle to be/show physical
Schoolyard = big groups	Smaller groups (teams?)
Leave it on the pitch (can call each other out)	Tend to take it off the pitch (not sure about being the face to face 'b***h')
Bring competitiveness easily - can bring them together	Unsure of confrontation with competitiveness - can drive apart
More tendency to want to be the best, want to show they're better	Less acceptable to try get the better of the other
More exposure to informal "tactical conversations"	Underestimated from a tactical coaching point of view
More motivationally intensive environment	Welcoming environment, subtle pushes



**Competitiveness**

**Physicality**

**Communication**



# Competitiveness

1. Not “the norm/socially accepted” to call each other out
2. Will push each other - more likely to be through encouragement & motivation
3. Don't like being the “b\*\*\*h” or the unliked character pointing out the mistakes, the errors (drama)
4. Permission from group to highlight mistakes - trust needs to be developed in the group

# Physicality

1. Young boys learn how to 'rough & tumble'
2. Young girls dont have the same socialisation
3. You need to introduce 'physicality' in a controlled manner
4. Don't make them feel like there is something wrong with them.

# Communication



## Coach - Players

1. Detail - Clarity - Consistency
2. Teach rather than Tell
3. Confrontational and Challenging Communication often doesn't bring the best out..
4. Group agreement on standards & expectations works better



# Communication



## Player - Player

1. How do you empower them?
2. Collaborative Communication

***“Send that bloody ball in to me”***

Versus

***“Ok so how do we link up better - I think I am making good runs but you are not picking that pass, do I need to change my run to suit your kicking, are you not seeing me?”***

3. Small groups, leaning on each other. It is your job to ask your group for help if you are struggling to meet a standard

# Demands of Our Games.



25%

## TECHNICAL

Solo,  
Kicking left/right,  
Striking left/right  
Handpass



THERE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A DIFFERENCE!

LESS INFORMAL EXPOSURE IS OFTEN AN ISSUE (SOCIALISATION)

25%

## TACTICAL

Playing with width  
Attacking Play  
Defensive Positioning



THERE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A DIFFERENCE

LESS INFORMAL EXPOSURE CAN BE AN ISSUE.  
CONSUMING SPORT/COACHES COMMUNICATION

25%

## PHYSICAL

Speed  
Endurance  
Strength  
Power



PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT FEMALES AREN'T "AS FIT"

(NORMATIVE DATA IS AN ISSUE)

25%

## PSYCHO-SOCIAL

Connection to Team  
Ability to train  
Communication on Pitch  
Coping with Challenges



DUE TO DIFFERENT GROUP DYNAMICS/SOCIALISATION YOU MAY HAVE TO APPROACH THIS AREA SLIGHTLY DIFFERENTLY TO GET THE SAME OUTCOME.



# One thing that makes playing sports fun for players is....

Note. The 11 fun factors (bolded) and the fun-determinants within each factor (bulleted) are listed in order of importance from highest to lowest.

## **Being a good sport**

- Playing well together as a team
- Being supported by my teammates
- Supporting my teammates
- When players show good sportsmanship
- Getting help from teammates
- Warming up and stretching as a team

## **Trying hard**

- Trying your best
- Exercising and being active
- Working hard
- Playing well during a game
- Being strong and confident
- Getting/staying in shape
- Competing
- Making a good play by scoring, making a big save, etc.
- Setting and achieving goals
- Playing hard

## **Positive Coaching**

- When a coach treats players with respect
- When a coach encourages the team
- Having a coach who is a positive role model
- Getting clear, consistent communication from coaches
- A coach who knows a lot about the sport
- A coach who allows mistakes, while staying positive
- A coach who listens and considers players' opinions
- A coach who you can talk to easily
- A nice, friendly coach
- Getting compliments from coaches
- When a coach participates with players during practice
- When a coach jokes around

## **Learning and Improving**

- Being challenged to improve and get better at your sport
- Learning from mistakes
- Ball touches, including dribbling, passing, shooting, etc.
- Improving athletic skills to play at the next level
- Learning new skills
- Using a skill you learned in practice during a game
- Playing different positions
- Going to sports camp
- Copying the moves and tricks that professional athletes do

## **Game time support**

- When parents show good sportsmanship by being encouraging
- A ref who makes consistent calls
- Being congratulated for playing well
- Having people cheer at the game
- Having your parent(s) watch your games
- Getting complimented by other parents

## **Games**

- Getting playing time
- Playing your favorite position
- Playing against an evenly matched team
- Being known by others for your sport skills
- Playing on a nice field
- Playing in tournaments

## **Practice**

- Having well-organized practices
- Having the freedom to play creatively
- Taking water breaks during practice
- Scrimmaging during practice
- Doing lots of different drills and activities during practice
- Partner and small group drills
- Practicing with specialty trainers/coaches

## **Team Friendships**

- Getting along with your teammates
- Being around your friends
- Having a group of friends outside of school
- Being part of the same team year after year
- Hanging out with teammates outside of practice or games
- Talking and goofing off with teammates
- Meeting new people

## **Mental bonuses**

- Keeping a positive attitude
- Winning
- It relieves stress
- Ignoring the score

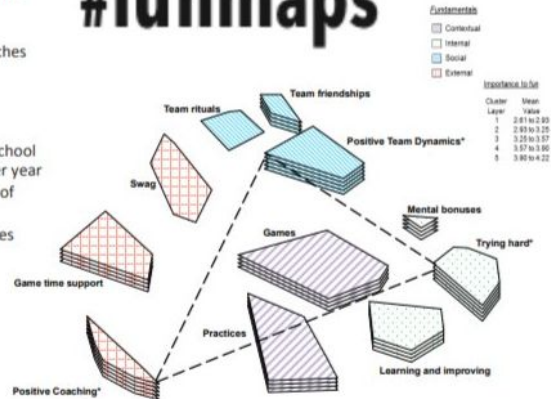
## **Team Rituals**

- High-fiving, fist-bumping, hugging
- Showing team spirit with gear, ribbons, signs, etc.
- Doing team rituals
- End-of-season/team parties
- Carpooling with teammates to practices and games
- Going out to eat as a team
- Doing a cool team cheer

## **Swag**

- Having nice sports gear and equipment
- Earning medals or trophies
- Traveling to new places to play
- Wearing a special, cool uniform
- Eating snacks/treats after the game
- Staying in hotels for games/tournaments
- Getting pictures taken

#funintegrationtheory  
#funmaps



## Retention

Research from  
Amanda Visek

# Retention Part 2

## Adult teams & Playing up



1. Are we rushing players up for the wrong reasons? Is it actually going to benefit them?
2. How do we pick the players that play up with adult teams?
3. Who is more important - “weaker” players on adult team -v- underage star?
4. Adult player who are frustrated with younger players - do they understand that they simply don't have the maturity to train? Haven't developed the right attitude?
5. Should an adult team be full of adults ideally?
6. This often comes down to numbers - But let's compare to a mens team - would there be a 16 year old in a senior dressing room? Physicality is a consideration but what about socially?



# REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES

# Competitiveness & Communication

Example - female teams I've worked with are extremely competitive, massive drive, all want to be winners

- *They will bring encouragement and drive to the pitch*
- *But struggle to bring the competitiveness of raising standards and calling out errors*
- *Will moan behind their back instead*

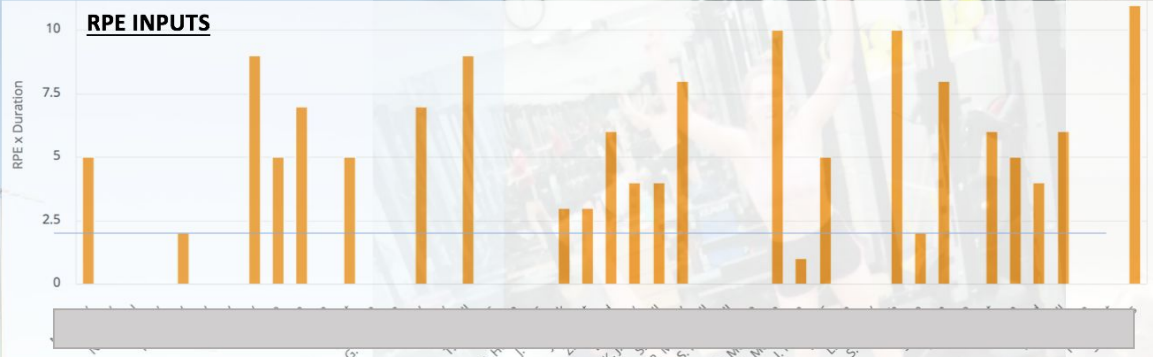


# Competitiveness & Communication

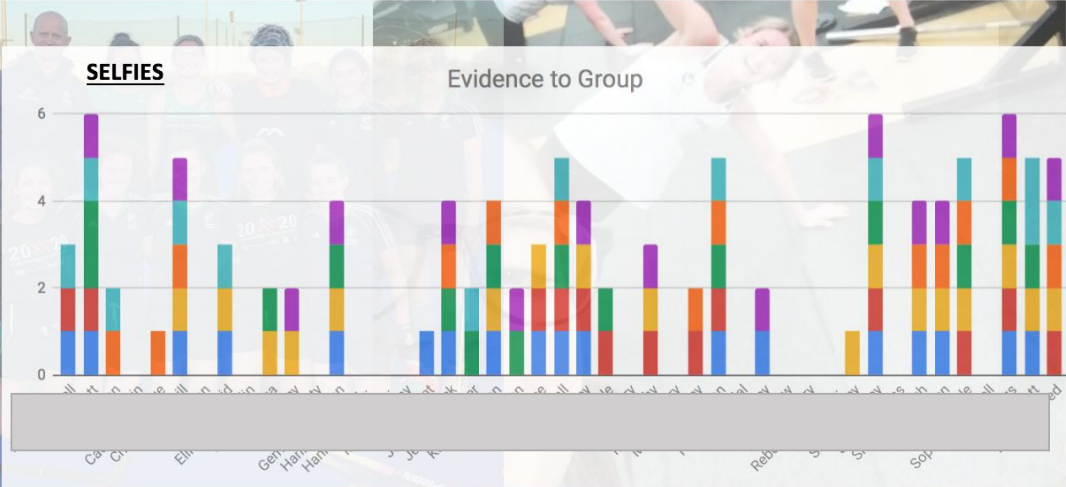
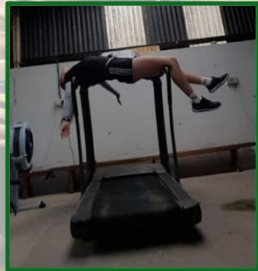
- Need to create an environment, a set of values and live by them (e.g. trust, accountability, transparency, work ethic)
- Use these to help build competitiveness - it won't happen overnight, need to chip away at it!
  - Start behind closed doors
  - Be transparent in sharing info/work done
  - Reinforce it consistently
    - Example - weekly reports to the team of player progress, individual sessions, tasks etc.



**U21 GIRLS**  
*RPE & Evidence Compliance*



**SELFIE OF THE WEEK:**



**WOW Scores:**



WOW 1		
	Name	No. Reps
1		449
2		410
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

WOW 2		
	Name	Seconds
1		582
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		



# Competitiveness & Communication

- Need to create an environment, a set of values and live by them (e.g. trust, accountability, transparency, work ethic)
- Use these to help build competitiveness - it won't happen overnight, need to chip away at it!
  - Start behind closed doors
  - Be transparent in sharing info/work done
  - Reinforce it consistently
  - Use your team leaders (encourage them to begin process of creating honesty/ accountability in work done)
  - Recognise the behaviours when it happens (be subtle)
  - Create mini competitions off the pitch (takes away the uncomfortable)



**IRFU**  
**WWOW LEADERBOARD**  
WWOW #1



	Name	Score (reps)
1		648
2		553
3		552
4		525
5		492
6		482
7		473
8		466
9	ah	464
10	a	454
11		410
12		401
13		392
14		390
15		378
16	arie	375
17	n	369
18		360
19	na	355
20		354
21		353
22		340
23		336
24		304
25	Feely, Laura	299



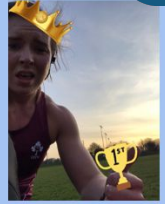
**IRFU**  
**WWOW LEADERBOARD**  
WWOW #2



	Name	Score (secs)
1	D...oria	427
2	T...	449
3	C...	454
4	D...	460
5	M...	470
6	C...	476
7	D...	479
8	D...	488
9	C...	489
10	S...	500
11	G...	503
12	N...	520
13	F...	537
14	M...	538
15	M...	540
16	B...	552
17	O...	559
18	O...	565
19	H...	570
20	B...	575
21	M...	580
22	M...	580
23	M...	581
24	M...	617
25	Fr...	618.6
26	O...	643
27	L...	656.35
28	P...	660



**IRFU**  
**WWOW LEADERBOARD**  
WWOW #3



	Name	Score (reps)	
1		191	Alternate Exercises
2		123	
3		113	
4		112	
5		111	
6		111	
7		110	
8		109	
9		101	
10		101	
11		100	
12		100	
13		97	
14		96	
15	toria	91	
16		89	
17		84	
18		84	
19		83	
20		81	
21		79	
22		78	
23		76	
24		75	
25		72	
26		72	
27		70	
28		62	
29		58	

# WXV's December Challenges

by Irish WXV's



**AM** Gym Session

**PM** On Feet Top Up with your club training (Option 1 or 2)



Complete **Gym Session Day 2** then

**Circuit 1**

1. 60 sec Wattbike as fast as

7



**\*Burpee Challenge**

Complete as many burpees (chest to floor) as you can in 30 seconds. Send video evidence!

*\*scores added to leaderboard*

...

6



2. Med Ball Slams x10
3. Burpees ...



**\*Sit Up Challenge**

Complete as many sit ups as you can in 30 seconds. Send video evidence to group! (hands to ...)



Complete **Gym Session Day 2** then

**Circuit 2**

1. 60 sec Wattbike as fast as



RECOVERY!

# Current climate issues/ideas

1. Skills challenges - scored?

*Google forms useful here*

2. Leaderboard based on improvement (versus previous attempt)

3. Graphs for accountability (who is doing the work?)

4. Skills & fitness challenges

5. Number of sessions in the week/mental load?





# How do you develop confidence in physicality?

1. Control the environment - make it predictable and “safe”
2. Don't get annoyed when the giggling starts & the approach is lacklustre!!
3. Consistent exposure - little and often

*Be Cunning around the Contact*

# Athletic Performance Learnings

## Injury Prevention/Robustness

- The need to get to know your athletes (i.e. training age, previous injury etc.)
- The need to keep it simple
- The need to be **consistent - little & often is key (in all aspects of physical prep)**
- Target areas to be aware of:
  - Hamstring
  - Groin
  - Calf
  - Knee
  - Ankle



# Athletic Performance Learnings

## Injury Prevention/Robustness - use warm ups/individual prep time

- Target areas to be aware of:
  - Hamstring
    - ✓ Exposures to high speed (weekly)
  - ✓ Single Leg RDL
  - ✓ Nordic Curls



# Athletic Performance Learnings

## Injury Prevention/Robustness - use warm ups/individual prep time

- Target areas to be aware of:
  - Groin
    - ✓ Partner Adductor Planks
    - ✓ Sumo Squats (*wide stance*)
    - ✓ Side Lunges
    - ✓ Change of direction activities

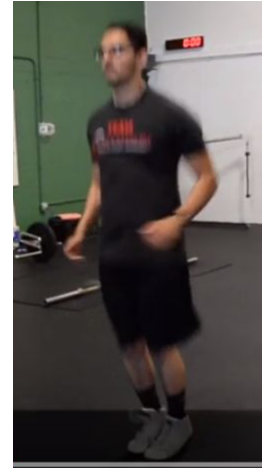




# Athletic Performance Learnings

**Injury Prevention/Robustness** - use warm ups/individual prep time

- Target areas to be aware of:
  - Calf
    - ✓ Double/Single Leg Calf Raises
    - ✓ Pogo Jumps - trying to jump high!



# Athletic Performance Learnings

## Injury Prevention/Robustness - use warm ups/individual prep time

- Target areas to be aware of:
  - Knee
  - Ankle
    - ✓ Double Leg Jump & Hold
    - ✓ Single Leg Forward Jump & Hold
    - ✓ Single Leg Diagonal Jump & Hold
    - ✓ Single Leg Lateral Jump & Hold
    - ✓ Partner Balance Tasks
    - ✓ Hurdle Jumps/Hops



# Sprinting form for Camogie player?

- Similar in hockey - running with the stick
- Does it have to be perfect running form?
- Is this a challenge to improve or do we have to adapt for the sport?



# Fitness levels for female athletes?

Young players and older/adults players

- Clear, planned session
- Short breaks - less talking
- Simple messages & consistency
- Games (SSG, match scenario) split with physical drills (fitness, races etc.)





# General Resources

## 1: Changing the Game Podcast

<https://changingthegameproject.com/is-there-a-difference-between-coaching-girls-and-coaching-boys-with-dr-kristen-dieffenbach/>

## 2: WomeninSport.org

<https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Female-Psychology-and-Considerations-for-Coaching-Practice.pdf>

## 3: World Rowing

[http://www.worldrowing.com/mm/Document/General/General/12/64/33/DdH\\_FISA\\_stage12executivesummary\\_English.pdf](http://www.worldrowing.com/mm/Document/General/General/12/64/33/DdH_FISA_stage12executivesummary_English.pdf)

## 4: Canadian Cross Country Skiing

<https://nordiqcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/Coaching-Women-final-EN.pdf>

## 5: GAA 15

<https://learning.gaa.ie/gaa15>

## 6: Fun Integration Theory

<https://www.parentsinsport.co.uk/2018/12/20/what-makes-sport-fun-for-your-children/>

# Questions

