



Co-Ed Considerations, Allyship, and Coaches of Girls—10 Tips

Included are considerations for those conducting co-ed sports, how boys and men and people of any gender can be allies, and tips for coaches of girls useful in a wide range of contexts.



PHOTOGRAPH BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

1

Coaching Girls in Context of Co-Ed Sports

■ **Inclusion is key** – If coaching a co-ed team, ensure girls are included equally and proactively in using the space, getting support, coach attention, and play.

■ **Be supportive** – Provide girls equal playing time to develop skills, try positions, and grow.

■ **Equal expectations** – Coach the skill and experience level, not the gender.

■ **Avoid double standards** – Be aware of perceptions. Notice how boys and girls are coached. Is it the same or different? Why? In what way does adjusting help?

■ **Include everyone** – Create expectations that all kids play

equally in engagement, playing time, instruction, support, and more. E.g., Create “pass to everyone” approaches in practices / games. Celebrate similarities and differences across players / genders.

2

Allyship – Boys and Men (and All) Supporting Girls and Women

■ **Allyship goes a long way** – Boys and men are integral in advancing gender equity, along with people of any and all gender identities. The work of making girls and women, and all, welcome in sport spaces is on everyone’s shoulders—together.

■ **Showing up matters** – Boys and men can do a lot to support and promote girls and women in

sports. E.g., boys cheering on a girls’ team pep rally, men being engaged and dedicated coaches of girls; and boys and men as coaches / leaders attending girls’ games.

3

Connect With Your Players and Among the Team

■ **Connect with team** – Start each practice by circling up, sharing names / check-in (coaches, players, team helpers) - everyone feels comfortable, welcome, “seen,” and connected.

■ **Introductions** – Introduction moments can be made fun by asking each player to share their name or a favorite color / show / movie while players clap-back after introduction.



games players can play at home (e.g., tossing and catching a ball) and playing sports games at recess / P.E. / lunch; watch local college / pro women.

■ **Girls leading** – Give girls responsibilities to demonstrate a skill or lead a drill to help girls get more engaged, build leadership skills / confidence, and connect. Try Captain of the Day!

4

Be Mindful of the Spectrum from Brand New to Veteran

■ **Gauge and connect to the level** – Recognize some players (no matter their age) are brand new to the sport, and some girls have played several seasons or years.

■ **Foundation** – Ensure basics are clear from start (rules, techniques, practice and game approaches). Check what players know and help them build on the foundation.

■ **Goal-setting** – Help set gradual personal / team goals and tailor milestones especially if they haven't played before / very much. Create appropriate goals. And challenge!

5

Encourage Play, Practice and Sports Outside of Practice / Game Time

■ **Support girls' access to sports in other ways outside of structured times** – Recommend

6

Use Inclusive, Encouraging Intentional Language and Practices

■ **Be inclusive** – Avoid non-inclusive phrases like “hey guys” or “sir” when circling up players and coaches or getting their attention – Try “players / friends / team / [team name].”

7

Connect to the Parents / Guardians of the Players

■ **Link up** – Make sure to connect (e.g., through email, text, league platforms and in-person) to get to know players' / families; update re: progress.

8

Make it Fun, Make it Positive, and Celebrate Often

■ **Center fun** – Any kid enjoys an activity if they're having fun. You can have players run laps while they sing or pretend to be different animals (younger); use dance moves! (older)

■ **Change it up** – Make sure to try different drills each week with new challenges.

■ **Use coaches / helpers to keep things active** – Split girls into groups so they get more play time (vs. long lines); ask parents / guardians to assist (if permitted).

9

Be Available and Get Regular Feedback

■ **Prepare** – Arrive a little early to prepare, review team plans, and connect with girls / families.

■ **Check-in** – Stay a bit after to cheer player progress, help those struggling, and get feedback.

■ **Understand your players' perspectives** – Acknowledge their experiences may be different from yours (e.g., handling home, school, and other challenges).

■ **Be present** – In practices and games, avoid distractions like cell phone use and side activities / chats – ensuring your attention is 100% on the team and girls.

10

Make Space for Girls

■ **Girls having physical and mental safe space for play is key.** Ensure practice / game areas are clear (e.g., kids / boys / men / other girls playing before or after the practice should know to wait their turn for facilities). Politely remind anyone in the play space it's the team's time to play; get staff help; no sideline heckling!