



PHOTOGRAPH BY K.M. KLEMENCIC

## Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Women Coaches and Coaches of Girls—10 Tips

*Getting more women into coaching and supporting coaches of girls, of any gender, is a key way to get girls in the game. Did you know that only a quarter of youth sports coaches in the United States are women? Women are terrific, skilled, impactful coaches and more and more women want to coach and can. Follow these tips to ensure women coaches and the coaches of girls have what they need to create a positive youth sports culture for girls and all kids.*

### 1 Women Coaches as Role Models

■ Include images of women in coaching roles. In all program materials (flyers, job notices, and outreach), imagery conveys messages that women are very much encouraged to apply, integral in the program, welcome, and should seek out coaching position(s).

■ **Girls and underrepresented youth seeing individuals like themselves is powerful in and around the game.** In fact, 77% of women leaders report a lack of exposure to women coaches which limits girls' sports participation. We can change that!

### 2 Actively Recruit Women as Coaches

■ Personally ask women in your community networks to coach. Reach out to parents/guardians, women volunteer groups and organizations, or local colleges. If they have never coached before or are hesitant, have them start out as assistant coaches or trainees.

■ Start early! **Encourage middle and high school girls to coach.** Reach out to athletic directors

at local schools and park sports coordinators to promote coaching as an opportunity for girl and young women players, plus officiation.

### 3 Promote Women Into Youth Sports Leadership

■ **Support and grow women in youth sports leadership.** Just as girls appreciate seeing a women coach role model in order to get into the game, women coaches and others appreciate women youth sports leaders and such leadership can be encouraging to women to apply to coach and join staff. Women are terrific leaders, to all!

### 4 Tailor and Support Training for Women Coaches

■ Learn the training needs of women coaches and offer support. Some women are new to coaching and some have been coaching and playing sports for decades. A novice women's coaching clinic can be helpful or a "next level / deeper dive" clinic for experienced coaches. **Offer options for women to organize and lead training.** Invest in women's coach training (e.g., licenses, courses, as needed).

## 5 Offer Allies and Networks

■ Provide allies. **Allyship, respect, and encouragement from various coaches, men, and others can aid in supporting women in their roles.** Sometimes a woman coach may be the only one or one of few in her league or division. Support her! Men in assistant coach or co-coaching roles can be supportive, helpful, and collaborative.

■ Build women's coach networks. Create or support connections among women coaches (if desired) from smaller peer groups to events and more (e.g., Global Community for Women in High School Sports, WeCOACH).

## 6 Support Women Coaches

■ **Check in regularly, to see how it's going.** Ask if any tweaks are needed (e.g., more training, more support such as a co-coach or assistant coach, additional equipment, scheduled space, facilities access, and information).

■ Consider family and other caretaking obligations. Recognize the many roles women

play and consider ways to help (e.g., provide programming for women coaches' children to free her up to coach).

## 7 Invite Women Coaches Back

■ Ensure effective women coaches are invited back each season. Be proactive and stay in touch with women coaches; **ask them to keep coaching!**

## 8 Have Women Coach Boys' Teams

■ To create gender equity, we need boys and young men to see women in coaching and sports leadership positions. **Women are great coaches to girls, boys, women, men, and all!** Think expansively about women coaches, their teams, and roles.

## 9 Celebrate Women Coaches

■ Featuring women coaches in youth sports programs for various successes is key (e.g., a great season, championship, high player retention, top marks in player surveys—not necessarily about winning). Consider a women coach of the season or year award to celebrate and affirm

women coaching. **Applaud her!**

## 10 Learn From and Be Inspired By Great Women Coaches

■ Increasingly women are coaching at the highest levels of sport from college to the professional leagues. Get to know the many excellent women coaches, learn from their examples, **champion their success, and share models with players.**



**Women lead.  
Women inspire.**

