



Good communication with girls is critical, and the social aspect cannot be ignored. Being allowed to play with your friends, feeling welcomed and part of the club, and supported by good coaches will help player retention. Although there is a huge social aspect to the girls/women's game, they are genuinely competitive and take their game seriously.

- Karen Wills

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR COACHING FEMALES

Is there a difference in coaching males to females?

"There are many similarities in coaching females and males and regardless of the gender or age group you are coaching, it is always important to know and understand each player, what motivates them and the best way for them to learn. Some key things to consider when coaching female players are that they are generally coachable and want to learn; they may need positive reinforcement to build their confidence and that they may take criticism personally. Team chemistry is also an important factor when coaching female teams. Social cohesion is important and if team chemistry is not built at the start of the season and monitored throughout, off-field issues can quickly effect on-field performance."

- Vicki Linton- Westfield Matildas Assistant Coach

Ante Juric, assistant National technical director (women's) at FFA believes that "there should be minimal differences between coaching females and males, and that the quality and personality of the coach is the determining factor on a players enjoyment."

When coaching females, regardless of whether the coach is male or female, trust, respect and effective communication is the key to a positive experience for all involved. This will happen when the coach's behaviour is:

- ▶ Consistent, regardless of the situation
- ▶ Mature, showing that the coach respects the player
- ▶ Transparent with a clear decision making process

Trust is one of the most important aspects of the relationship between a player and coach. It is important for all coaches to remember that females especially value this and when coaching females that it can take a

little more time to develop.

Here are some tips and advice for coaches of females which will help them to earn trust and respect from their players:

- ▶ To engage with females of any age, coaches need to ensure that as a collective, everyone feels welcome, engaged and valued. Females in particular want to make sure that everyone feels included and a part of the group and if one player is alienated, there is the strong possibility of losing the trust of the rest of the group.
- ▶ Initially, it can be helpful for coaches to give positive

feedback to the group as a whole, and once a strong relationship has been developed begin to give constructive feedback on a more individual level. This is to develop a positive and safe environment before there is any feedback that could be perceived as 'negative'.

- ▶ Females can be very concerned with capability to perform a skill or activity at their first attempt – boys will be far more likely to try, and try consistently regardless of results the first time so a lot of encouragement and patience is required, particularly with players who are only just beginning

Understanding the unique differences in needs and wants of the players is crucial too, in many cases, girls and boys are seeking something different, the dynamic between these relationships must be identified, understood and worked with. It is important to note that both male and female coaches benefit from education about the differences between coaching girls/women and boys/men at different age groups. In addition, it is important to consider the different skills required for coaching different ability and experience levels for girls and women.

- Rosalie Viney, Hurlstone Park Wanderers/Canterbury District Soccer Football Association