



We like to invite older female junior teams to train with the Senior women during their season to help with the transition from Juniors to Seniors. Getting the chance to meet senior players & train with them with a aim of giving them confidence to continue playing football through to Senior level.

– Women's Football Survey Respondent

RETAINING CURRENT PLAYERS

Reasons for leaving football

- There are many reasons that female players may drop out at various stages throughout their football journey:
- Family and work commitments
- Changing motivations and personal factors
- Poor coach/mentor experience
- Lack of peer support (image and exclusion concerns)
- Limited offering (e.g. have to play with/against males, can only play in one format, can only play at a certain time of day or on certain days)
- Facilities are not female friendly (e.g. no female changing room or bathroom) or available (lack of time set aside for female football)

Retention Strategies

- To address these issues and more, below are some strategies which might help your club to keep players involved at all stage of their journey:
- Use more experienced and confident players to act as mentors or buddies for other players in their team – this helps to foster a sense belonging and togetherness as well as empower the players acting as mentors
- Set time aside at your facilities for 'females only' – no limit on age group or ability simply welcome everyone
- Do everything you can to assist young families and people with heavy work commitments;
- Offer babysitting for parents who play or coach at your club

- Match up husband and wife teams on training nights and venues – help them with travel and work commitments (they could even train together adding to the social aspect!)

- Regularly expose the girls in your programme to positive, strong female role models. Invite successful women, athletes and community members to be guest speakers or do training sessions with your group.
- Encourage girls to be positive role models for one another by sharing their successes outside of sport during group discussions
- Recruit professional coaches who understand the

We initiated club mentor/buddy systems (senior players buddied up with junior players and required to touch base with these players on a fortnightly basis). We also invested in senior female players to subsidise or sponsor coaching licences to improve coaching standard - the best female clubs (retention and/or participation) invest more in ensuring they have experienced and passionate coaches providing guidance and educating players.

– Women's Football Survey Respondent

female psyche and who fit into your club culture
– for more on coaches please see the coaching section (beginning on page 50)

- Be flexible in the different forms of football that you offer, both in the type of football, but also the timing for those who may have other commitments and to cater for different skill levels and ages where appropriate
- Involve female players in other aspects of your club and the game as they grow and develop – you never know if/when players might want to coach, referee or help out with the general running of the club