

How can sports clubs attract and retain women and girls?

Each sports club is unique, that's part of the beauty of sport. Each team or club has its own history, its own traditions and characters as well as its own future aspirations.

There is no one-size fits all approach for clubs trying to attract women and girls, but the following are core elements which the WSFF believe should be effectively implemented by most clubs.

- 1) Activities should be accessible to women and girls at appropriate times; men shouldn't be given preferential access to pitch or facilities just because they are men or because of historical precedence.
- 2) Clubs should link to local schools and youth clubs to ensure that girls who enjoy the sport in other settings, feel comfortable in joining the club.
- 3) Clubs should provide gender, age and skill-level appropriate coaching to enable all women and girls to develop their skills
- 4) Clubs should provide the opportunity to socialise in a safe and comfortable environment
- 5) Changing rooms and toilets should be pleasant environments, which are reliably clean and functioning and separate from the men's changing areas.
- 6) Clubs should be as flexible as possible in allowing women and girls decide when they want to play, considering time and frequency.
- 7) Clubs should provide gender, age and skill-level appropriate competition to allow all women to reach their competitive potential
- 8) Clubs should be family friendly. This may mean that families can participate together, or separately in the knowledge that children are being engaged with positive activities.
- 9) Avoid making women sign up for extended periods at the first visit. Women often do not feel comfortable making long term commitments without knowing what they are getting in to.
- 10) The first contact is crucial. Clubs should be welcoming to new comers. Welcoming can include:
 - an up to date, user friendly website which gives the new participant a true reflection of the club,
 - a friendly, reliable and supportive first point of contact, usually via email or telephone
 - a friendly, pleasant and reassuring first experience when the new participant arrives at the club
 - the use of a buddy system for new members
- 11) Clubs should have good links to their affiliated NGB, to ensure that talented girls and women are identified and put on appropriate talent pathways.
- 12) Clubs should ensure that women are involved at all levels of the club including coaches and leadership committees.
- 13) Clubs should ideally be in an accessible location which can be reached in a safe and sustainable way.
- 14) Clubs shouldn't advertise for new members if they don't really want them. New members will quickly leave if clubs seem cliquey and unfriendly to newcomers or beginners.
- 15) Coaches at the club should adapt their styles to ensure that women and girls are encouraged and supported.
- 16) Coaches and appropriate volunteers should be CRB checked.
- 17) Sexist attitudes and behaviour should be challenged and not tolerated.
- 18) The club should be accredited by the appropriate NGB club mark scheme.

