

2

Coaching Female Participants

This factsheet is one of a series produced by sports coach UK and the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation aimed at sports deliverers and sports coaches who work with women in informal sports settings. These factsheets provide insight into the informal female participant and her needs, and provide guidance on the type of environment and coaching style she needs in order to be attracted to, and retained in, informal sport.

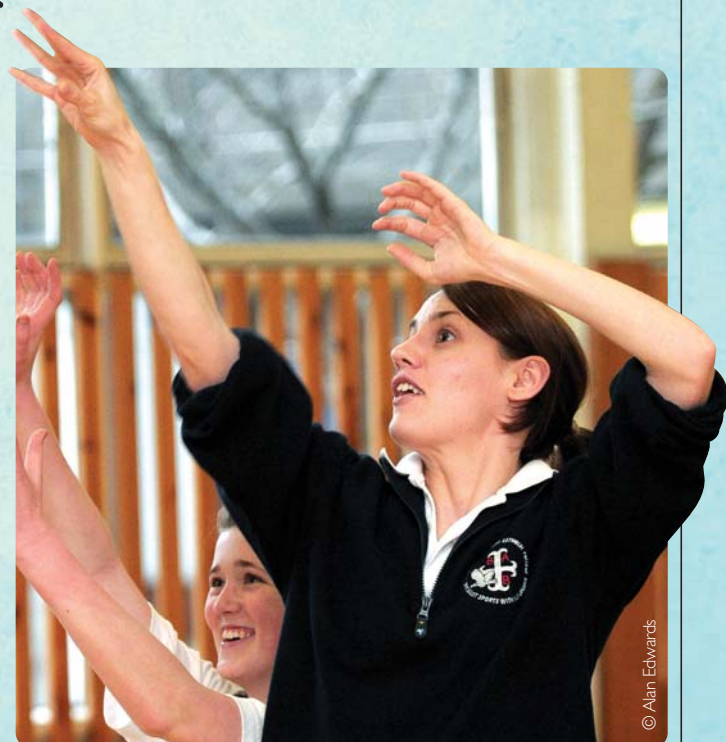
In particular, this factsheet is relevant to people who design and develop informal sports offers, people who directly deliver informal sport (coaches, leaders, coordinators etc – referred to as 'coach'), as well as people who develop coaching workforces.

The information contained in this factsheet was obtained by an independent research agency who interviewed over 40 women and 11 coaches from across the country who participate in Run England, No Strings Badminton or Just Play football. The sports were selected to be representative of individual, racquet and team sports.

While we aim to provide advice and guidance, we are cautious about making generalisations, and it is for you, the coach and sports deliverer, to contextualise the following information to your own settings. Also, remember that your participants are individuals. What appears in the information below will not be representative of all female participants but is a generalisation based on research carried out. This information is for guidance only.

What is a coach in this setting?

Within the informal setting, it is important to consider the coach's coaching style and how their behaviours and actions can influence the success of the session. A coach does not always need to coach, but they do always need to create a supportive and motivating environment for their participants. Sometimes, a coach will take on a leadership, facilitator or organiser role and should be led by the participants' needs and requests for coaching advice, hints and tips.



What do participants want from their coaches?

The perception of you as a coach can either help or hinder the success of your sessions. The diagram below sets out what our research shows female participants want their coaches to be.

Dos and don'ts for coaches

Coaches should:

- ✓ take an individual approach
- ✓ listen
- ✓ understand a person's ability
- ✓ demonstrate
- ✓ participate
- ✓ give advice (with appropriate tone)
- ✓ be passionate about (and skilled in) the sport
- ✓ be motivational and enthusiastic
- ✓ plan sessions in advance
- ✓ be on time
- ✓ keep the group organised.

Coaches should not:

- × single people out
- × be badly organised
- × be inexperienced in the sport
- × patronise
- × push people too hard beyond their level
- × be judgemental or impatient
- × be too strict or intimidating.

'I came back because I like my coach.'

Run England participant, London

'You've got to be really talkative and very clear...and good at listening too.'

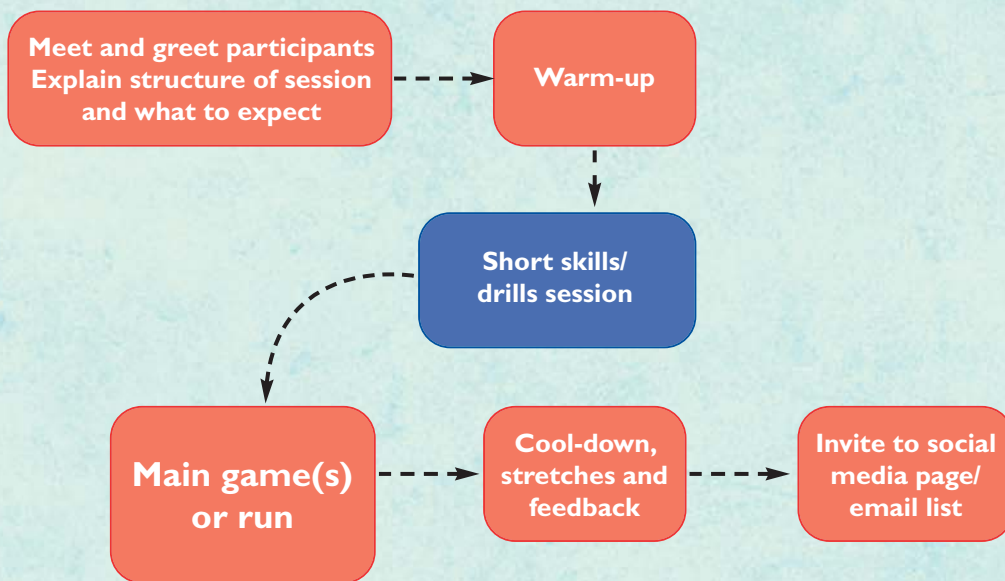
Badminton leader, Level 1



Session plan

Successful session plans are flexible and meet the needs of your participants. Some common session plan structures are demonstrated below.

Many women said they wanted the emphasis of sessions to be on game play, rather than on practising skills and drills.



Skills and attributes

Qualified coaches are important, but what is more important to the participants is that the coaches are passionate and enthusiastic about the sport, and have the experience to guide an informal coaching session and know when to coach and when to stand back.

Participants felt they should possess:

organisational skills	people skills	health and safety knowledge	specialist sport skills	physiology and anatomy (running) knowledge.