



Raising the growth and participation
of female sport officials in Europe



MENTORING AND
LEADERSHIP GUIDE FOR
WOMEN SPORT OFFICIALS
IN EUROPE

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WINSO

Raising the growth and participation
of female sport officials in Europe

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1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 - ABOUT THE WINS PROJECT

1.1.1 - RATIONALE AND AIMS

The overall ambition of the WINS project is to address gender equity in officiating – across all sports – by undertaking comprehensive research activities into the issues facing women sport officials and producing practical solutions which can support the organisations responsible for their recruitment, retention and development.

The main targeted impact of the EU-funded initiative is for sport organisations across Europe to become more capable to put in place effective recruitment, retention and career development policies for women sport officials, ultimately improving gender balance in the role.



1.1.2 - THE WINS PARTNERSHIP

Coordinated by the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE), the WINS project is innovative in its constitution as it brought various stakeholders such as universities, European sport federations, the Olympic movement and officials' associations from several EU Member States. This ensures that the development of outputs is aligned with the realities and expectation of the sector, and involves a high level of consultation and dissemination activities.



COORDINATOR OF THE WINS PROJECT

France / Europe

European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE)



France

Association Française du Corps Arbitral Multisports (AFCAM)



Netherlands

Dutch Olympic Committee Dutch Sports Federation (NOC*NSF)



United Kingdom

Sports Officials UK (SOUK)



Netherlands / International

International Federation for Sports Officials (IFSO)



United Kingdom

University of Portsmouth



Bulgaria

National Sports Academy «Vassil Levski» (NSA)



Belgium/Europe

Euro Hockey



Switzerland / Europe

European Athletics

1.1.3 - PROJECT OUTPUTS

1 OUTPUT 1

A European research report on gender and sport officiating

Building on the WINS research activities this report highlights the key issues and provides new knowledge in gender equity in sport officiating.

2 OUTPUT 2

A European Compendium of good practice case studies on recruitment and retention of women sport officials

This output describes in detail a selection of case studies of good practice in recruitment, retention and engagement of women sport officials. These have been taken from across Europe in different countries, sports and contexts.

3 OUTPUT 3

An innovative online toolkit for recruitment and retention of women sport officials

The partners collaborated to design a practical and innovative online toolkit for sport organisations to respond to the issues and challenges of engagement and retention of women sport officials explored and defined in the WINS project.

4 OUTPUT 4 - (this publication)

A mentoring and leadership guide for women sport officials in Europe. This output takes the form of a guide to increase the impact and sustainability of the project. It is intended to be used by sport organisations to develop mentoring and leadership programmes.

All these outputs will be available from the WINS library www.wins-sport.eu



1.2 - OBJECTIVES OF THE MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP GUIDE

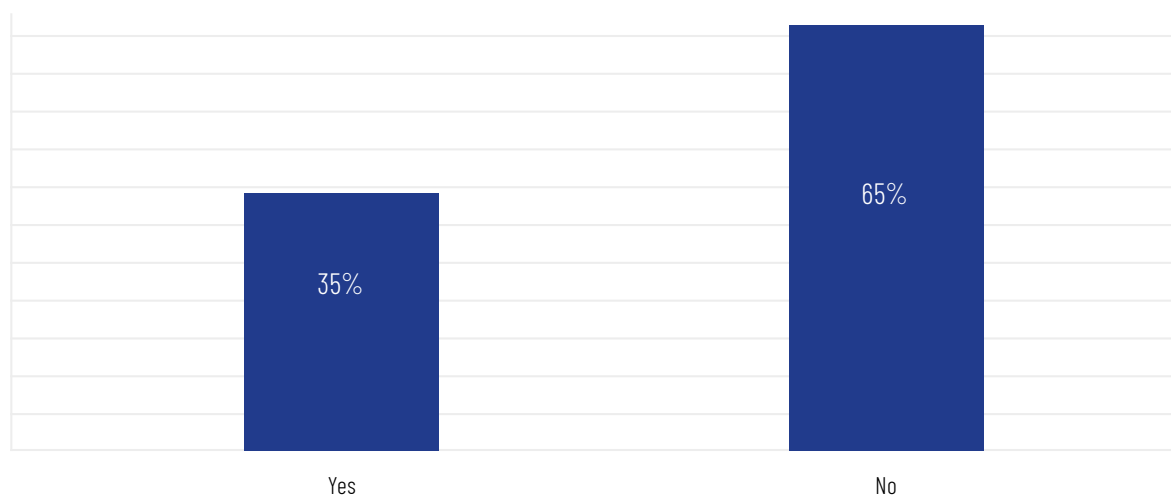
This mentoring and leadership guide has been created for sport organisations who wish to create a mentoring programme for women sport officials (referees, umpires, judges etc) or benchmark an existing mentoring programme against principles of good practice. The guide aims to inform sport organisations with practical steps for implementing a successful mentoring programme for women sport officials.

1.3 - RESULTS OF THE WINS RESEARCH IN RELATION TO MENTORING

The WINS European Research Report on Gender and Sport Officiating¹ which includes the results of the first ever European-wide survey of women sport officials – involving over 3,200 women sport officials from 64 countries in Europe and beyond – found a number of positive factors, as well as areas which require greater attention. The research found that women sport officials are generally quite happy, demonstrating a great enthusiasm and passion for officiating. However a range of issues were highlighted where greater focus and attention is required, one of these is mentoring.

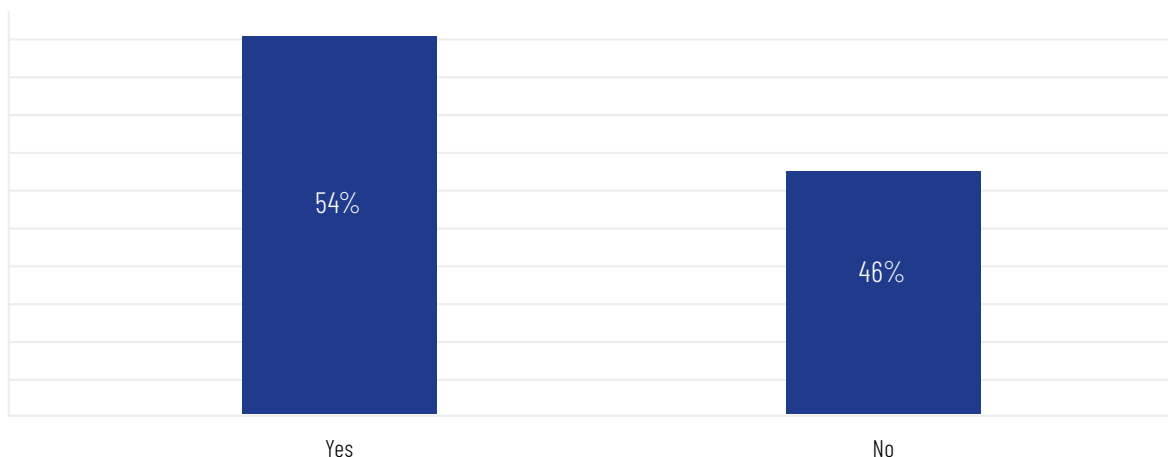
65% of the women officials who took part in the survey stated they do not have a mentor, out of these women officials, 54% said they would like to see mentoring introduced.

Figure 1: Do you have a mentor?



1 - For the full report go to the WINS library at www.wins-sport.eu

Figure 2: If you do not have a mentor, is this something you would like to see introduced?



The WINS research also included interviews with sport administrators who are responsible for officials within a range of sport federations. The research uncovered a variable approach to mentoring and support for women sport officials across Europe, further reinforcing the need for this guide.

Informal approaches to mentoring were seen in some sports with an aspiration to create a more formalised programme. An interviewee from the sport of Savate stated “We don’t have a mentoring programme, we do that informally. But I can imagine that there will be”. While an interviewee from fencing stated “..we don’t have mentors, men or women. We just have friends who talk about some matches, but just between us, there is nothing official”.

The WINS research also uncovered that in some sports there is a view that the limited number of women officials could mean that those women officials feel unsupported. This lack of support network for women could be a barrier to recruitment and retention and the existence of a mentoring programme could help to alleviate this.

A positive part of the WINS research was that there does appear to be a developing understanding that mentoring and support are essential as sports try and recruit and retain women officials in greater numbers. Some sports utilise the same pathway for men and women although there can be some amendments specific to women officials. One interviewee from rugby union stated, “there is a growing appetite for female match officials to feel supported in being able to go up the pathway, we’ve got a framework loosely in place to give additional support to female referees”.

The research highlighted mentoring programmes that apply to both men and women, one challenge that arose using this approach was that some older mentors may not have the skills to mentor a woman official. One example highlighted in the research looked at the issue of whether a mentor has to have operated at a higher level than the mentee, while a final issue covered by the study is the level of staffing and resources needed to establish a successful mentoring programme.



2

MENTORING AND WOMEN SPORT OFFICIALS

2.1 - BACKGROUND

Mentoring forms an essential aspect of development for sports officials more widely and women sport officials in the case of this mentoring guide. Unfortunately, we know that mentoring is a difficult process to get right and that a significant number of sport officials do not have a mentor, even though they would like one. A successful mentoring programme can help officials to feel included, supported and also assist with their development. Issues with retention are prevalent within officiating and support, in the form of mentoring, can also help targeted assistance for officials and be included within any retention strategy.

Mentoring requires a critical mass of people and numbers of officials. It requires the mentor to provide their time and expertise and it requires the mentee to listen and take on board the advice from the mentor. However, there is also a need for the mentee to feel comfortable asking the mentor questions and seeking advice in the first place, and therefore the placement of mentors and mentees is a vital process in this arrangement. Something covered further as this guide progresses.

Literature tells us that mentoring is well received and something which is desired by sport officials. This introductory section will focus on the literature and policy that exists around mentoring, for women, sport officials more widely, and where appropriate, other mentoring schemes within sport. There is also an example of a real-world mentoring programme, set up and run in the Netherlands and based around individuals who want to become an umpire coach, to provide context for the ideas, concepts and material covered within these opening sections.

There are challenges for sports who are trying to develop mentoring programmes for women sport officials, and this document will help to navigate those challenges, provide some information and answers around best practice and demonstrate how mentoring programmes might be initiated and maintained. Based on understanding from literature, policy, research findings from the WINS project, and real-world industry experience, this document provides essential information and reading for sports organisations and sports federations across Europe and beyond. Many sports are grappling with crises around the recruitment and retention of officials and an integrated mentoring programme could help address some of these challenges.



Mentoring has often historically positioned the mentor as an expert in their subject area and the mentee as a novice. This arrangement can emphasise a one-way flow of information, from the mentor towards the mentee – where strategies or advice are given to those mentees who ask or are in needⁱ. However, some in the sports coaching subject area have called for mentoring to be educative, and to move away from the more traditional approaches to a more collaborative knowledge sharing approach, where the mentor and mentee learn from one anotherⁱⁱ. There are similarities between sports coaching and officiating, in terms of the provision of mentoring. For example, sport coaching is still dealing with issues around volunteerism, professionalisation and inconsistencies around the best way to educate the workforceⁱⁱⁱ, and many of these issues are also evident in officiating^{iv}.

In the sports coaching field, the concept of multiple mentoring has been discussed. There are benefits in multiple mentoring that have been identified for the mentee, although this has predominantly been in the elite sport environment^v. More specifically, the engagement with mentees suggested that they source different mentors for specific knowledge development, and mentors themselves recommended that their mentees should identify a variety of mentors, including cross-sport and non-sport mentors^{vi}. Moreover, focus has also been given to those planning, delivering and evaluating formal sports mentoring in coaching and the role of the programme directors within sports organisations has received particular focus, with these individuals often overseeing and managing these mentoring pathways^{vii}.

However, whilst it is useful to understand some of the key concepts in the coach mentoring literature, it is important to understand the developments in mentoring specifically related to officiating. The following section considers this content in more detail, before focusing on the specific literature related to women sports officials.

2.2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite research telling us about the importance of mentoring and the benefits that a successful mentoring relationship can provide^{viii}, sport officials have identified that mentors are often not routinely provided^{ix}. Research in football stated that when mentoring is provided it is often sporadic, resource dependent and focused predominantly on those officials who have just started their careers, or those officials right at the top of the development pathway^x. Research tells us that a lack of a mentoring programme, or a related lack of support for sport officials, can mean that they leave their chosen sport. In the United States, it was found that officials discontinued because of a lack of an officiating community, managerial decision-making, and a lack of mentoring and continuing education^{xi}. Other research has identified that mentors produced positive benefits for officials, especially in the early stages of their careers^{xii}, as they provided an alternate source of feedback from either player coaches or umpiring directors. Findings also demonstrate that mentoring can be beneficial throughout the officiating pathway, and that mentoring programmes can be a method of improving support for officials, particularly if they face challenging situations in the course of doing their job^{xiii}. The construction of effective mentoring schemes could also provide increased support for officials, and retain older officials within their chosen sport^{xiv}.

We know that if sports officials are subjected to verbal and/or physical abuse, the presence of a mentor can impact upon whether the officials intend to leave. Dawson and colleagues found that satisfaction with mentoring and personal development has the potential to help improve the retention of sport officials. As such, the key finding of the research, is that all forms of abuse need to be sanctioned and policed by governing bodies, with more support being offered to officials than is the case currently^{xvi}.

Other research involving mentoring in football, has also focused on its importance and the impact that successful mentoring relationships can have on individuals^{xvii}. Cultural differences both between individuals within a particular country and across countries, if sports organisations operate internationally, have been highlighted as important to understand, particularly when considering mentoring-based relationships that might be implemented by sporting organisations^{xviii}. Research has also provided examples of the importance of women having mentors in the workplace in sports or occupations that are predominantly occupied by men^{xix}. It has been found, from research with women American football players, that the relationships and mentoring arrangement created by players with other players, as well as coaches, helped the women to navigate their way through the American football landscape^{xx}. The research also accentuated the importance of this community to the women players and, given the importance attached to the assisted mentoring arrangement, findings suggested that there should be steps taken to ensure the social interaction is happening^{xxi}. Given the limited research into mentors for women in sport, it is clear that there is also not a significant coverage of mentoring related to women sport officials.

Regardless of the lack of research into women in officiating and more specifically here, the mentoring of women sportofficials, mentorship has been expressed as being fundamental to women's success, hence the importance of increasing representation at the grassroots level where women sport officials gain their initial experience^{xxii}. Baxter and colleagues^{xxiii} found that officiating communities have a strong desire to support one another. As part of this support network, mentorship and positive interrelationships are some of the ways in which officials feel supported in their role.

In research conducted with women sport officials in South Korean football, the need for mentoring schemes was explicitly identified. Kim and Hong^{xxiv} found that mentoring was critical to retain women sport officials, with mentoring also able to operate as a social support function. The use of mentoring also meant, over time, that the level of employee stress caused by conflict between family and work reduced. A quote from a woman sport official highlighted the support for mentoring within this research, "I think it would be so helpful if 1-2 mentors can be appointed who are eligible to provide advice regarding several issues for female referees"^{xxv}.



Work in the United States also identified that there is a lack of insight into the experiences of women sport officials, particularly related to mentoring. The research found that the women sport officials did not see other women in the occupation or role of officiating, and they lacked a mentor to help them navigate the sporting environment in which they operated^{xxvi}. This research, conducted with former basketball officials in the United States, found that the gender of the mentor made a difference. Specifically, if the mentor was a woman sport official, the sentiment was that they could empathise and understand some of the challenges that their mentees might be facing. If the mentor was a man, it was considered that this would be more difficult^{xxvii}. This research highlights the need for an increased number of mentors for women sport officials and for sporting organisations to understand women's perceptions of the work environment and the potential negative impact of organisational policies.

Mentoring can be utilised to assist with support issues for women sport officials. However, as discussed earlier in the literature review, in soccer, it appears that the mentoring system is not working as effectively as it could. Women soccer officials believed that the mentoring is more ad hoc and that sometimes there is no interaction between the mentor and mentee at all^{xxviii}. The research identified that County FAs in England were trying to attract more women into soccer, and that they were also trying to support the women sport officials already in the system through women only courses and pathways specific to women officials. There were inconsistencies in the more formalised support network and concerns around ongoing support, such as mentoring, and the strain that this can place upon women officials^{xxix}.

Unfortunately, the literature tells us that some of the stereotypes have not been removed as barriers to women's participation in officiating, and also mentoring programmes. For example, Drury et al^{xxx} found that although mentoring has been mentioned to women officials in soccer, there were still misunderstandings and misgivings because of the way that they information was presented;

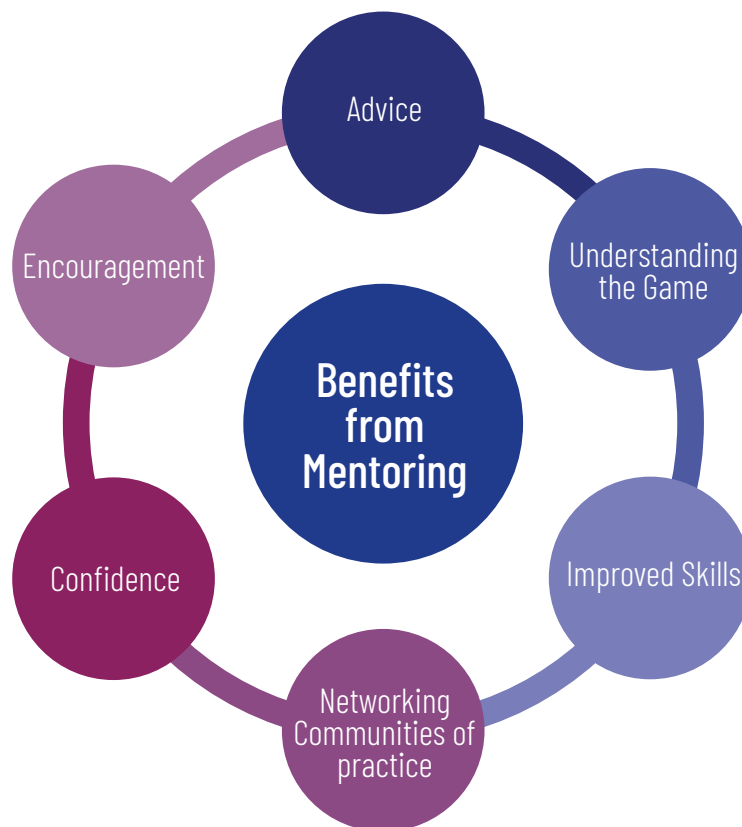
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«I went to a County FA and a guy came down with all these leaflets he wanted to send out to get more women as assessors and mentors which I said was fantastic. I looked at the leaflet and every single image was a white male and I said 'so how do you think a woman would look at that? Is she going to think that's for her?' Probably not. Make it relevant, target markets where women will be, [where they] will see [it] and will feel that it's for them. Make them feel it is a job that they can do.»^{xxxi}

The academic literature can tell us a significant amount about the information around mentoring for sports officials. As we have seen in this section, this literature is available, although there is a lack of depth in this subject area. This is also the case for mentoring within women's sport officiating and their experiences in these mentoring processes. As we can see from the extract above, there are still barriers that exist for women sport officials, and some of these challenges have been highlighted and identified as part of the WINS project. It is the aim of this guide to help overcome some of these barriers and assist sports with their mentoring provision for women sport officials. As such, the following section focuses on information and content from different sports, specifically related to mentoring programmes and, where possible, women's mentoring programmes.

2.3 - FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTENT FROM SPORTS

A simple internet search reveals a number of sports and websites dedicated to the mentoring of sports officials. A good resource is the National Association of Sports Officials, based in the United States – they provide a practical guide for mentoring, alongside what mentors can get from the arrangement ([Mentoring in Officiating: A Practical Guide](#)). It is important to recognise both sides of the arrangement and the Rugby Football Union in England (RFU) have produced a graphic which outlines some of the benefits that mentors can expect to see:

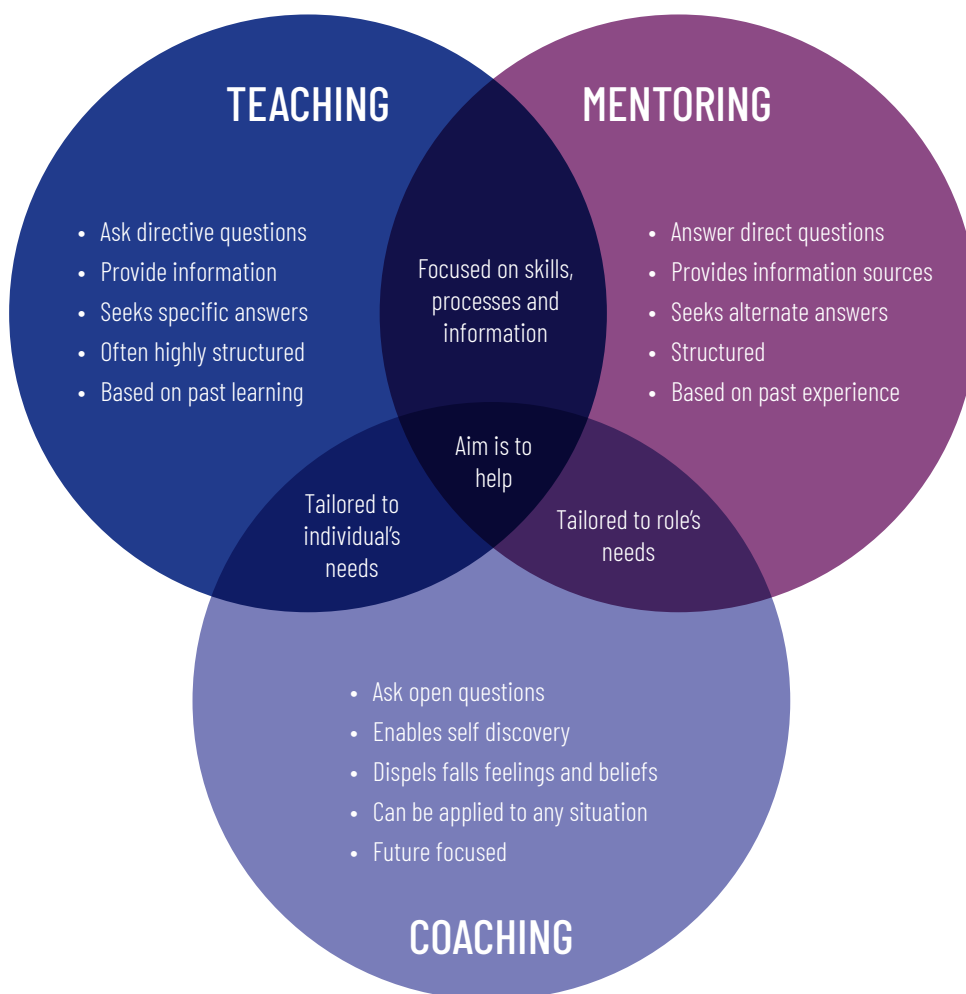


Adapted from the RFU ([Mentoring, n.d.](#)).

Mentoring is a skill. Mentors will often use a variety of methods to engage those they are mentoring. They can empower those that they mentor and share their experiences, skills and understanding of the sport. They can also provide support for new and inexperienced officials, as well as those officials who are moving through the talent pathways in their chosen sport. In order to do these things mentors will use a variety of approaches such as verbal communication including feedback, observation and watching fixtures/performances, teaching and coaching, moral and mental preparation and support, fitness advice and listening skills to engage those that they are mentoring in the process. This relationship is critical in terms of the success of the mentoring arrangement.

Sports are recognising the importance of mentoring for officials, but also for women who might play or coach their chosen sport, and also for future women leaders. For example, Table Tennis England have initiated a female sports leaders programme as part of a UK Sport mentoring scheme ([International Leadership Mentoring Programme](#)). The International Leadership Mentoring Programme is designed to bring together 10 current women sports leaders and 10 future women sports leaders to provide mentoring support over a nine-month period. The programme has been designed as part of UK Sport's focus around growing a more diverse sporting system, increasing the diversity of leadership on national and international sporting organisations/federations ([UK Sport](#)).

In the Netherlands a scheme was developed for hockey umpire managers and coaches, to develop their understanding about what is required from these individuals related to their support for umpires who they engaged with, including the mentoring that they and others provided. To support this delivery, a range of resources were created to provide a course of the umpire managers and coaches who were providing the mentoring for the hockey umpires. As part of these resources a teaching, mentoring and coaching Venn diagram helped to devise the course and position mentoring within the educational delivery programme (see below).



This assisted the tutors when positioning mentoring alongside teaching and coaching, and the shared values between the different areas. Besides this, key cards were produced around conducting a planning interview, how to conduct a reflection interview, positive coaching and constructing an action plan as an umpire coach. To supplement this information, presentations were given around optimising potential and individual visions for umpire coaches around support, mentoring and coaching for their umpires were also discussed further.

This section has identified key literature and information around the notion of mentoring in sport, particularly related to sports officials, and where possible women sports officials. The importance of mentoring has been identified, and the fact that many women sport officials who do not have mentors would like to have a mentor, emphasises the importance of this area. This section has also focused on examples from different sports and countries around mentoring and support schemes and provision, and what some of these schemes actually provide for the sports officials and those mentoring the sport officials. This mentoring guide now turns attention to how a mentoring programme might be devised and constructed for women sport officials.





3

HOW TO DEVELOP A MENTORING PROGRAMME

KEY PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

3.1 - MENTORING AS A SUPPORT MECHANISM FOR WOMEN SPORT OFFICIALS









The previous section framed mentoring as an essential aspect of development for women sport officials. This section will provide some practical steps and support for sport organisations who wish to develop a mentoring programme for women sport officials. First, we can look at some of the key principles and features of mentoring which can be applied to a women sport officials' mentoring programme.

- 🔗 Mentoring can support and encourage women sport officials to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they aspire to be.
- 🔗 Mentoring is a support mechanism where an individual is willing to share direct experience, by assisting someone ready to grow in the same or similar role.
- 🔗 Mentoring is a partnership between a mentor and a mentee who requests advice and guidance from the mentor who offers support and possible solutions.
- 🔗 Mentoring is a supportive process where a mentor understands the context of the sport and the role of the sport official and can guide and support the mentee accordingly through the next phase of their journey.
- 🔗 A mentoring programme for women sport officials will provide individuals with the skills to learn from disappointments as well as successes.
- 🔗 A mentoring programme can empower women sport officials – by sharing skills and experiences.

3.2 - MAIN STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING PROGRAMME

For sport organisations to provide an appropriate, achievable mentoring programme, the following steps should be considered to ensure the programme is fit for purpose to support and develop women sport officials going forward in their chosen sport.

-  **1 - Define the objectives:** Determine the goals and objectives of the mentorship programme. Clarify the purpose of the programme, for example whether it is skills enhancement, knowledge transfer, or personal growth. Establish clear expectations for both mentors and mentees.
-  **2 - Identify mentors:** Identify potential mentors within your sport who have the necessary experience, expertise, and willingness to mentor others. Look for individuals who exhibit strong skill development qualities, good communication skills, and a genuine interest in helping others succeed.

-  **3 - Recruit mentees:** Identify women sport officials who would benefit from a mentor, or those who have requested one, and invite them to participate in the programme. Consider their aspirations as a sport official, developmental needs, and compatibility with potential mentors. Encourage mentees to express their goals and expectations from the mentoring relationship.
-  **4 - Match mentors and mentees:** Pair mentors and mentees based on their goals, interests, and compatibility. Consider the mentees' needs and the mentors' areas of expertise to ensure a good match. Provide an opportunity for mentors and mentees to meet and establish rapport before formalising the mentoring relationship.
-  **5 - Set clear guidelines:** Develop guidelines and expectations for the mentor programme. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both mentors and mentees. Establish the frequency and duration of meetings, modes of communication, and confidentiality agreements. Ensure that both parties understand their commitments and the anticipated outcomes.
-  **6 - Provide training and resources:** Offer training sessions or resources to mentors and mentees to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for an effective mentoring relationship in sport officiating. Provide guidance on effective communication, goal setting, feedback, and problem-solving. Encourage mentors and mentees to continuously learn and grow throughout the programme.
-  **7 - Establish a structure:** Determine the structure of the women sport officials mentoring programme. Decide whether it will be a formal or informal programme and the expected duration of the mentoring relationship. Consider implementing milestones or checkpoints to assess progress and provide support if needed.
-  **8 - Foster regular communication:** Encourage regular communication between mentors and mentees. Suggest a schedule for meetings, either in person or virtually, and provide a platform for ongoing communication and sharing of resources. Encourage mentors to provide guidance, feedback, and support to mentees, while mentees should actively seek guidance and share progress with their mentors.
-  **9 - Monitor and evaluate:** Regularly monitor the progress of the mentoring programme and collect feedback from mentors and mentees. Assess the effectiveness of the programme in achieving its objectives and identify areas for improvement. Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and refine the programme for the future.
-  **10 - Recognise and celebrate successes:** Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements and successes of mentors and mentees within the mentoring programme. Provide opportunities for mentors and mentees to share their experiences and lessons learned with others in the organisation or community. Recognition and celebration help to foster a positive culture and encourages continued participation.






Points to remember

- 🔗 Mentoring is a relationship-based support mechanism, the mentor serves as an experienced trusted advisor to a mentee who is committed to the mentoring programme.
- 🔗 Mentoring is a supportive and nurturing relationship. Mentors provide emotional support, encouragement, and motivation to mentees.
- 🔗 Mentoring is tailored to the specific needs, goals, and aspirations of the mentee.
- 🔗 Mentoring is not a one-time interaction but rather a long-term and continuous process.

3.3 - DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Identifying and training mentors

We begin this sub-section but outlining steps to identify and train mentors, as a crucial step in establishing a successful women sport officials mentoring programme. Here are some steps to identify and train mentors effectively:

-  **1 - Define mentor criteria:** Determine the qualities, skills, and experience you are seeking in mentors for a women sport officiating programme. Consider factors such as expertise in the sport officiating field, good communication and listening skills, empathy, willingness to support and guide others, and a positive attitude. Having clear mentor criteria helps in selecting suitable candidates.
-  **2 - Seek recommendations:** Ask for recommendations from within the sport, from the federation, leagues, clubs and wider sport community. Talk to others who can suggest potential mentors based on their knowledge, experience, and reputation. Recommendations can help identify individuals who have a track record of supporting and guiding others effectively.
-  **3 - Promote the mentorship programme:** Publicise the mentoring programme within your sport. Use various communication channels, such as email newsletters, website or social media, to inform people of the programme and invite them to participate as mentors. Create a compelling message that highlights the benefits and importance of mentoring.
-  **4 - Call for applications:** Open a formal application process for individuals interested in becoming mentors. Collect applications that include relevant information, such as their background, experience, motivation for mentoring, and any previous mentoring or coaching experience. This step allows individuals to express their interest and commitment to the mentoring programme.
-  **5 - Assess applications:** Review the mentor applications based on the defined criteria and desired knowledge and experience. Consider factors such as their experience, expertise, compatibility with the mentee population, and their motivation and willingness to invest time and effort in the mentoring programme. Select candidates who align with the programme's objectives and requirements.



6 - Conduct interviews: Conduct interviews with the shortlisted mentor candidates to further assess their suitability for the role. Ask questions related to their mentoring approach, previous experiences, problem-solving abilities, and commitment to the programme. Interviews provide an opportunity to gauge their communication skills and interpersonal dynamics.



7 - Provide mentor training: Once mentors are selected, provide them with comprehensive training to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective mentoring. Training should cover topics such as active listening, effective communication, setting goals, providing constructive feedback, addressing challenges, and maintaining boundaries. Tailor the training to the specific needs and goals of the mentoring programme.



8 - Offer ongoing support: Provide ongoing support to mentors throughout their mentoring journey. Offer resources, materials, and tools that can assist them in their mentoring relationships. Facilitate mentor networking events or support groups where mentors can share experiences, seek advice, and learn from one another. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions can help mentors reflect on their progress and address any challenges.



9 - Evaluate mentor performance: Regularly evaluate mentor performance to ensure they are meeting the expectations of the mentoring programme. Seek feedback from mentees, observe interactions, and assess the outcomes of the mentoring relationships. Provide mentors with constructive feedback and offer opportunities for further growth and development.



10 - Recognise and celebrate mentors: Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of mentors within the mentorship program. Recognise their efforts and impact on the mentees' development. Consider hosting mentor appreciation events, offering certificates or awards, or highlighting success stories to inspire and motivate mentors.

By following these steps, you can effectively identify and train mentors who are well-suited to support and guide mentee women sport officials in the mentoring programme. Investing in mentor selection and training ensures that mentors are prepared and equipped to provide valuable guidance and support to their mentees.



What to look for in your mentors

This is not an exhaustive list of attributes and attitudes that mentors should all possess, but may be helpful to consider when determining the role of the mentor in your women sport officials mentoring programme:

- 🎧 Mentors must appreciate that the welfare of the mentees they work with is paramount – It is important that whilst they support the mentee within their role and their further development, they must at all times be mindful of any potential mental health and wellbeing issues, so the speed of their development has to be at a manageable pace for the mentee.
- 🎧 Mentors must be mindful of the individuality of each mentee and promote their areas of learning, development and welfare – their development must be led by the mentee and supported by the mentor.
- 🎧 The approach of mentors should be mentee-centred based on enhancing inclusion and access, honesty, trust and respect – there must be a connection between the mentor and the mentee so these areas can grow and develop, if there is a personality clash, don't be afraid to move on and appoint someone else, as this can happen sometimes.
- 🎧 Mentors must promote equality, respect, diversity, and challenge stereotypes – these are important areas that we must observe at all times and lead by example.
- 🎧 Mentors need to understand the role of the mentor is not necessarily the only support required by the mentee, there may be times where there is a need to bring in or signpost the mentee to other support mechanisms within your organisation or partner agencies.
- 🎧 Mentors need to understand and value the processes related to critical reflection.
- 🎧 A mentor would be expected to use a range of blended learning such as observation, talking, listening, questioning, and reflecting.
- 🎧 Mentors should adopt professional dialogue with the mentee at all times.
- 🎧 Mentors should offer practical advice relevant to the role within sport officiating the mentee is looking to undertake.
- 🎧 Mentors should develop an ability to build a positive relationship with mentees.
- 🎧 Mentors should demonstrate a higher level of inter-personal skills including questioning and giving feedback.
- 🎧 Mentors should be able to offer advice on the organisational and political context within your sport and how to navigate it successfully.
- 🎧 Mentors should offer practice advice on managing people and situations within the mentee's environment.
- 🎧 Mentors should be able to develop action plans, monitor, review and evaluate the progress of the mentee.



Criteria for mentors

You should also take account of the following potential criteria for mentors when devising your women sport officials mentoring programme.

- 🎯 Have a credible background in sport officiating and is well known and respected in their area.
- 🎯 Adhere to and operate within the values and behaviours of the sport.
- 🎯 Have capacity to commit and uphold a mentoring relationship
- 🎯 Understand their individual reasons for wanting to become a mentor.
- 🎯 Have a network within the sport and sport officiating that their mentee can be introduced to in order to raise their profile and visibility.
- 🎯 Be an effective developer, being well-placed to affect the learning and development of others.
- 🎯 Have appropriate experience, knowledge, and training to undertake the role.
- 🎯 Be prepared to undertake the appropriate training.
- 🎯 Conveys confidence and has the ability to motivate and inspire others and to be a positive role model.
- 🎯 Promote the sport in a positive manner at all times and at all levels.

Skills, attributes and qualities of a mentor

The mentor must have and display the necessary skills, qualities and desire to develop others, these can be represented in many different ways but are always positive and 'mentee' focused. This is not an exhaustive list but will undoubtedly include the following:

Skills and Attributes

- 🎯 Display professional behaviour in all aspects of the role.
- 🎯 Knowledge of the role and responsibilities.
- 🎯 A willingness to engage in professional dialogue with their mentees.
- 🎯 Open minded, listen and learn independently and with others.
- 🎯 Take calculated and appropriate risks.
- 🎯 Persist with difficult situations and find solutions.
- 🎯 Learn from their mistakes and those of others.
- 🎯 Try things out and look for understanding.
- 🎯 Make connections with previous learning and experiences.
- 🎯 Think clearly, sequentially and in a logical manner.
- 🎯 Use imagination to develop and problem solve as appropriate to the task.
- 🎯 Be both strategic and opportunist.

- 🕒 Display positive communication: active listening, questioning and feedback, encourage reflective review.
- 🕒 Display feedback skills: to offer advice challenging the mentee development areas and offer possible options to consider whilst retaining empathy.
- 🕒 Demonstrate action planning and target setting: Knowledge of the Improvement Process to include the cycle of objective setting, performance, review.

Personal Qualities

- 🕒 Empathy
- 🕒 Patience
- 🕒 Objective
- 🕒 Trust
- 🕒 Empower

3.4 - DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE MENTEE

This is not an exhaustive list of desired skills, attributes and experience but should contain information that help to identify the role of mentee within the programme.

- 🕒 The involvement of the mentee is voluntary and is there to assist with their own learning and development.
- 🕒 Mentees have been selected for their potential; therefore, they must be committed to the programme from the onset.
- 🕒 Mentees must be honest and open with themselves and their mentor in order to get the best possible outcome from the programme.
- 🕒 Mentees must be proactive in contacting the mentor and provide information in a timely manner.
- 🕒 Mentees should stick to topics and information that sit 'within the mentor relationship', mentors are not professional councillors.
- 🕒 Mentees should listen to the mentor, reflect and take action accordingly.
- 🕒 Mentees should always be professional and polite showing respect for the mentor during the process.
- 🕒 Mentees should learn from the knowledge and experience of the mentor and reflect on how they can make it relevant to their future aspirations in sport officiating.
- 🕒 Mentees should always be professional with their dialogue with their mentor.
- 🕒 Mentees should complete any agreed action plan as directed, and monitor, review and reflect on their progress.

Criteria for Mentees

You should take account of the following potential criteria for mentees when devising your women sport officials mentoring programme.

- 🎯 Must be nominated by their Sport / Local / National Association / Federation having been identified as a woman sport official who could be showing potential to reach higher levels officiating in their sport, or may already be promoted to higher officiating levels, or perhaps they need help and support to retain an existing position and develop further within their role.
- 🎯 Mentees must have the potential to grow and aspire to higher roles.
- 🎯 Is confident and has the ability to inspire others and to be a positive role model within sport officiating.
- 🎯 Must adhere to and operate within the values and behaviours of their sport.
- 🎯 Must be open to personal learning and development.
- 🎯 Must promote their sport in a positive manner at all times and at all levels.



3.5 - MENTOR AND MENTEE SELECTION

Effectively placing mentors and mentees is crucial for creating successful and productive mentoring relationships within women's sport officiating. Recruiting mentors and mentees, then matching them into mentoring groups, is a critical part of running a mentoring programme. When promoting the programme to potential mentors and mentees it's important to provide an outline of the programme's benefits, requirements and expectations so they are fully aware of the role and expectations.

To enable the selection and subsequent matching of mentors/mentees it's useful to ask individuals to provide some information about themselves and their individual skills and attributes as well as their mentoring expectations and requirements when they register their interest in the programme, also their experience and reasons why they wish to be a part of the programme as either a mentor or mentee.

The experience gap between mentor and mentee is important as the mentee will be looking for guidance and support from someone who is more experienced than they are, so mentors tend to be more experienced in their officiating career than mentees. However, if the experience gap is too large, it may mean the mentor seems un-relatable or intimidating for the mentee.

There are two defined methods of matching mentors to mentees within a specific environment such as a sport, they are the 'Mentee Self Matching' and the 'Co-ordinated Matching' both are very successful and offer both the mentee and the mentor a degree of choice and by doing so, will often lead to a more successful mentoring relationship going forward.

Mentee Self Matching



How it works: Mentees are provided with details about the mentors on the scheme and select the mentor(s) that they believe suits their requirements.



The pros: Mentee self-matching has the benefit that the mentee may be more likely to commit to the mentoring relationship and it may help get the mentoring sessions off to a good start.



The cons: However, as mentees are more likely to choose mentors who they identify with, it might limit mentee exposure to different styles and perspectives. If not managed appropriately, it could also mean that some mentors are selected by multiple mentees while others go unselected.

Co-ordinated Matching



How it works: The scheme coordinators match mentees with mentors (or a selection of potential mentors that the mentee can choose from) based on the information provided in the registration forms.












The pros: Mentee preferences are taken into account in the matching process, but coordinator matching has the benefit that mentees are more likely to be matched with a mentor that will challenge them or provide new perspectives.



The cons: Coordinator matching does however put added administrative burden on the scheme coordinator. With a large scheme it can require a significant time investment.

Here are some steps to help align mentors with mentees via a more traditional process:

-  **1 - Assess mentee needs:** Begin by assessing the needs, goals, and expectations of the mentees. Understand what specific areas they want to develop, the skills or knowledge they are seeking, and the challenges they are facing. This information will guide you in matching them with mentors who possess the relevant expertise and experience.
-  **2 - Identify mentor strengths:** Evaluate the strengths, skills, and experience of potential mentors. Consider their areas of expertise, industry knowledge, leadership qualities, and personal attributes. Look for mentors who align with the mentees' needs and have the ability to guide and support them effectively.
-  **3 - Consider compatibility:** Look for compatibility between mentors and mentees. Consider factors such as personality traits, communication styles, work preferences, and values. While some differences can be beneficial for growth, ensure there is a basic level of rapport and a foundation for effective communication and understanding.
-  **4 - Seek input from mentees:** Involve mentees in the placement process by allowing them to provide input on their preferred mentor attributes or specific mentor preferences. Consider their input when making final placement decisions. This involvement helps to increase mentees' ownership and satisfaction with the mentoring relationship.
-  **5 - Conduct mentor-mentee interviews:** Facilitate interviews or meetings between potential mentors and mentees. This allows them to interact, share expectations, and gauge their compatibility. Encourage open and honest communication during these meetings to ensure that both parties feel comfortable and have a clear understanding of each other's goals and expectations.
-  **6 - Consider developmental opportunities:** Consider the developmental opportunities that each mentoring pairing can offer. Match mentees with mentors who can provide the necessary guidance, support, and exposure to help mentees achieve their goals. Look for mentors who can challenge and stretch mentees' capabilities while also providing a supportive environment.
-  **7 - Monitor and assess progress:** Regularly monitor and assess the progress of the mentoring relationships. Maintain open lines of communication with both mentors and mentees to understand how the relationship is evolving, address any issues or challenges, and provide support if needed. Regular check-ins help ensure the effectiveness and satisfaction of the mentoring pairs.
-  **8 - Provide ongoing support:** Offer ongoing support to both mentors and mentees throughout the mentoring relationship. Provide resources, training, or guidance as needed. Be available to address any questions or concerns and offer assistance in navigating any challenges that may arise.
-  **9 - Allow flexibility:** Recognise that mentoring relationships can evolve and change over time. Allow for flexibility in the placements and be open to revisiting the pairings if necessary. Some mentoring relationships may require adjustments based on the mentees' evolving needs or if compatibility issues arise.

The success of a mentoring relationship depends on the alignment of mentor and mentee goals, effective communication, and a supportive and compatible pairing. By considering the needs, strengths, compatibility, and developmental opportunities, you can effectively place mentors and mentees for a fruitful mentoring experience.

3.6 - MENTOR AND MENTEE RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Agree what is 'inside' and what is 'outside' the mentoring relationship.

The purpose of the mentoring programme is to help the mentee be more effective in their current role within sport officiating or prepare for a higher officiating level they aspire to. The mentee may wish to talk about issues that sit slightly outside this remit that mentors may not be comfortable with or be competent to work outside their domain of specialism. It is recommended that "boundaries" are agreed at an early stage so that both parties know what is "sport officiating related" and what is a "non-officiating area". Examples that may be described as a "non-officiating area" may be issues to do with alcohol, family relationships, bereavement and drugs to name but a few examples.

Mentor and mentee relationship

The following aspects are important when determining the mentor and mentee relationship:

- 🕒 Understand the boundaries of the mentoring role.
- 🕒 Both mentor and mentee discuss expectations of the programme.
- 🕒 The responsibility for identifying discussion topics, surfacing ideas and structuring the relationship should be led by the mentee and supported by the mentor.
- 🕒 Identify tools to help establish the relative strengths and potential areas of development of the mentee.
- 🕒 Agree the points of the development or action plan.
- 🕒 Agree the achievable desired outcomes and how to get there.
- 🕒 Discuss and agree any further assistance that may be required such as subject specialists.
- 🕒 Agree the protocols: frequency and duration of contact; type of contact; outcomes arising from contact; end goals; time frames.
- 🕒 Anything which requires 'professional' support is likely to sit outside of the relationship but can be discussed and arranged through the relationship.



With regard to the mentor and mentee relationship – it is important to also note the following points:

- 🕒 Mentoring relationships are voluntary and can be ended by either party at any time. Where possible, advance notice must be given by either party if for any reason they are no longer able to participate in a mentoring relationship so that relationship can wind down and new matches can be made if applicable.
- 🕒 There is no set contracted time that a mentoring relationship should last for and will depend on the individuals involved; ideally, they should last for at least 12 months, or until the mentee has achieved their goal, for them to be effective.
- 🕒 Mentoring is a two-way process and should be a rewarding experience for both parties, it's an ongoing relationship.
- 🕒 The levels and place of confidentiality in the mentoring process – These parameters should be set at the outset in order to create boundaries, these can be re-evaluated as the relationship grows.
- 🕒 The information that both the mentor and mentee discuss is completely confidential. Whilst throughout the process it requires the mentor to take notes and record issues, they do not have to include any names or dates or include any comments that the mentee may not wish to have recorded.
- 🕒 The mentee should always receive an exact copy of the notes made after each meeting so that they are fully aware of the information shared.
- 🕒 The responsibility to create and maintain a successful mentoring relationship will rest with the mentee and the mentor; it will require an investment of time, energy and thought from both parties.

Managing expectations

It is important that everyone involved in the women sport officials mentoring programme understands how to manage expectations of the mentor and mentees.

- 🕒 **Anticipate and overcome difficulties:** At the start of any relationship there could be difficulties to overcome, these could be linked to value and behaviours or be more basic such as, one party being used to doing things differently, anticipate these differences, and ensure individuals are aware to come to the relationship with an open mind and the tools in which to manage any situations that arises.
- 🕒 **Build and maintain the mentoring relationship to focus on solutions:** there must be rapport between the mentor and mentee relationship to succeed, this may take some work on one or both parties to develop and may not be instant, work on it and always focus on positive solutions to ensure the best foundation in order to continue to build the mentee / mentor relationship.
- 🕒 **Manage any potential issues that may arise within the relationship:** It may not always be 'plain sailing' in the mentor / mentee relationship. It is important that mentors recognise any potential issues and be proactive in dealing with them. This could mean that individuals have to be honest and open and address the issue or depending on the type of relationship that has developed they may need to look at other tools to address the problem, what is key is that individuals must deal with it, it's not an option to leave it as it will fester and turn into a bigger problem.
- 🕒 **Remember the scheme is completely voluntary for both the mentee and the mentor:** If circumstances arise that a working relationship is no longer possible, it is expected that there is an agreed "professional separation" and the process of mentor support will cease.

- 🎯 **Realistic expectations of what can be achieved:** make sure the expectations are always kept positive and realistic, this way both parties will be able to measure small bite size chunks of achievement which will instil confidence in the mentee as they can see their own improvement.
- 🎯 **Record keeping appropriate to the activity:** the mentor must make sure they keep full records of the meetings with the mentee and any other information that is relevant to the mentee development which has been agreed within the relationship.

Positive results of a productive mentoring relationship

- 🎯 Measuring results – this can be achieved in many ways, the first being the mentor grows and develops and achieves their desired goals or role they have been aiming for.
- 🎯 Successful growth of the mentee – Other measurements could be they can clearly identify the development of the skills and personal growth of the mentee.
- 🎯 Growing confidence – even if the mentee doesn't achieve the goal they have initially set out to, they will have grown in confidence and self-esteem and be ready to apply for the next officiating opportunity.

Potential aspects of a mentoring relationship review

- 🎯 The need for self-reflection – gaining feedback from others and continuous improvement of the service offered is pivotal to the success of the relationship and achieving positive outcomes.
- 🎯 Appraisal of Mentors – in order to sustain the quality of the programme, mentors should be appraised throughout the process and encouraged to self-reflect in order to make sure the mentee is receiving the best possible support.
- 🎯 Monitoring – Ideally conduct health checks with mentors and mentees every six months from initiation of the relationship, and then again at the end of the mentor relationship by way of a survey to ensure that both parties feel supported and are getting the most out of the relationship. This will also enable feedback to be collected to make improvements where necessary and appropriate.
- 🎯 Evaluation – the effectiveness and success of mentoring relationships will be unique to each relationship, and we strongly encourage mentees to evaluate and review progress made towards achieving their goals and objectives regularly throughout the relationship.



When the mentoring relationship comes to an end

If the Mentor/Mentee Relationship needs to end before the proposed period of time, even if the mentee has selected the mentor themselves, there are circumstances in which it is not in the best interest of the parties involved for the relationship to continue. For example, a mentee may choose a mentor outside of their sport and during the allocated period they decide they actually need someone from within the sport, or it may be, a mentor, due to a change in their personal life, may feel they do not have the time to continue giving the mentee the support they deserve.

If the mentor or mentee decides it is necessary to dissolve the relationship, a “learning conclusion” can help to bring closure. A learning conclusion is a reflective conversation about both the process and the content of the learning that had occurred thus far. They could use the following approach:

- 🔗 Acknowledge the stumbling block encountered without casting blame or passing judgement, e.g. “It looks as if we have come to a point where it would be best for a different mentor to be chosen.”
- 🔗 End on an upbeat note, focus the conversation on what each has learned and how they might apply that knowledge in the future, e.g. “Let’s look at the pluses and minuses of our relationship so that we can each learn something from it.”
- 🔗 Express mutual appreciation. acknowledge the progress and accomplishments that resulted from the relationship, e.g., “although we haven’t been able to accomplish all our objectives, we were successful in some areas. I attribute our success to your persistence and determination.”

3.7 - LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership is crucial to the growth and development of individuals and organisations. This is especially true when promoting and implementing gender equality and other forms of diversity. Leaders should understand the benefits of equality and diversity and ensure programmes are available within their organisation to deliver across the spectrum of equality, diversity and inclusion.

A key goal is to improve the quantity and quality of women leaders within sport officiating. There is a need to support leadership development within and external to the sport organisation and encourage opportunities to progress nationally and internationally.

The objective of leadership training and development is to provide individuals with the skills, knowledge and understanding required to empower them to become leaders in their sport. By developing and empowering the individuals to achieve their own potential it will in turn strengthen sport at all levels.

A leadership programme aimed at women sport officials should be designed to deliver the following objectives:

- 🎯 Develop the individual woman sport official personally and professionally
- 🎯 Create higher skilled people to strengthen the sport/organisation
- 🎯 Help address the gender equity balance
- 🎯 Provide the skills and expertise to empower women sport officials (and others) to take on senior leadership roles within their sport
- 🎯 Provide individuals with the theoretical and practical training to help them undertake leadership roles within their sport
- 🎯 Identify a clear development pathway for women sport officials to understand their journey, both current and future
- 🎯 Provide mentoring opportunities for the initial part of their leadership journey

There are also some specific principles that can be applied to mentoring leaders:

- 🎯 Identify the existing skills and attributes related to leadership of the mentee and offer structured support for their areas of development
- 🎯 Have a clear understanding of the environment of sport officiating in which the mentee is striving to achieve higher status
- 🎯 Know what it takes to be a 'leader' in the sport officiating environment
- 🎯 Understand the political landscape of the sport organisation at all levels of operation
- 🎯 Use new and existing networks in the sport environment to introduce to and raise the profile of the mentee
- 🎯 Be aware of key digital media and how to use it effectively to promote the mentee as a leader in a positive way
- 🎯 Have a good understanding of how people learn and process information in order to affect the mentor's individual growth as a leader.

3.8 - THE ROLE AND VALUE OF MALE ADVOCATES IN THE MENTORING PROCESS

When it comes to change initiatives aimed at increasing gender parity, in this case for women sport officials, those driving the initiative often struggle to engage men in the process who hold positions of power and influence. Consequently, change initiatives sometimes become labelled as 'women's issues' within an organisation or sport and they fail to resonate with the internal stakeholders effectively or positively.

To address this issue, we first need to understand the concept of a male advocate and breakdown some of the barriers and misconceptions which can often prevent men from getting involved positively with gender, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Encouraging Male Advocates to be the Conduits for Positive Change

Many women's development programmes engage with their male advocates but what do we mean by this term? They are men who are committed to gender equality and the growth and development of women within the world of sport at all levels, expressing positive behaviours, demonstrating active efforts to address gender inequalities and supporting women through their journey.

Advocates come in many forms and it's perhaps better not to focus on what they are but instead on what they can do for the individual and their women's sport officiating. Men who are advocates for women's development and promotion often do so by privately and publicly supporting equality, inclusion, and diversity as part of their own core values, beliefs and behaviours. These efforts may include supporting women individually, discussing equality openly within their networks and in cases of inequality actively work to address them. To promote male advocacy, we would suggest rather than using congratulatory titles such 'Ally's' or 'Champions' which gives a perception that these men who support gender balance are exceptions, the goal would be to make it the norm.

Breaking down the Gender Silos

To engage male advocates in the women sport officiating initiative, we must first identify and understand any potential barriers that may be in place to prevent this positive action. We know from experience there are three main groups within the male demographic in general including the Resisters, Neutrals and Advocates. Apart from our obvious Advocates that are known to us, we have noted that many others fall into the Neutral group who don't really have a view either way, these are the men that have potential to be our future advocates and influencers to support gender equality in sport officiating and individual women on their officiating journey. Some of the challenges and misconceptions we may have to consider and address to bring these men onside are as follows:

- 🕒 Lack of knowledge about equality, diversity and inclusion
- 🕒 Some may not be aware of gender inequality problems, or the organisations target for gender equality
- 🕒 Not knowing how to engage with the issue and how they can assist
- 🕒 Inability or unwillingness to realise the benefits of engaging as advocates
- 🕒 Men may see gender equality as a loss of opportunity for them to progress



Advancing Together

The following are some ideas which can be used to move forward and deliver positive change within sport through programmes to support gender equality, such as a women's sport officials mentoring programme:

- 🔗 Model the right behaviours: male advocates should be mindful of the environment they create by being sure of the positive message they send and modelling the right behaviours. This also applies to them not assuming what support the women sport official needs but by asking her first how the advocate can help them.
- 🔗 Listen more and talk less: advocates should talk to women sport officials with the intention to listen and understand the challenges they face and the support they need will inspire trust and respect. Creating awareness through sincere dialogue enables male advocates to provide actionable support.
- 🔗 Promote women identified with potential: male advocates in senior positions within sport can support women sport officials identified with potential when it comes to ensuring where possible they receive the appropriate opportunities for training and development.
- 🔗 Call out inequality: male advocates can support women sport officials who are not being treated equally by speaking up and reporting negative events. They can also show support by sharing positive articles, videos etc that supports the gender equality theme mainly through social media, even small steps can make a difference to how people view equality.
- 🔗 Enabling male engagement: frame the gender balance as normal practice rather than a 'woman's issue', sell the benefits of having diversity.
- 🔗 Initiate male engagement: demonstrate how diversity improves any sport organisation's productivity and participation. Consequently, talking about the relevance of gender diversity as it applies to their own roles might also appeal to their sense of fairness and social responsibility.
- 🔗 Create alliances: inviting male advocates to be part of the conversation about gender leadership and equality builds awareness, creates alliances, and fosters a diverse perspective at all levels. Men are very likely to respond to personal appeals from colleagues, friends and family members as opposed to formal directives and/or mandated programmes.



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