LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Nottingham City of Football:

Female Coach Survey – February 2017

Reader Information

This report was prepared by Stephen Zwolinsky and Professor Jim McKenna.

Report Reference:

Zwolinsky, S. and McKenna, J. (2017). *Nottingham City of Football: Female Coach Survey, February 2017.* Centre for Active Lifestyles, Leeds Beckett University.

Contact Details:

Stephen Zwolinsky,

102 Fairfax Hall,

Leeds Beckett University,

Headingley Campus,

Leeds,

LS6 3QS

Phone: 0113 812 9107

Email: S.Zwolinsky@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Contents

Figures:

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION: An influential female coaching workforce is likely to be crucial in helping girls to improve current levels of engagement with football. Nevertheless, female coaches may face considerable barriers getting into coaching and engaging interventions such as 'Nottingham City of Football' (NCoF). Many behavioural factors will influence this engagement; barriers typically revolve around motivation and competencies in three domains; individual, social and structural (providing a 3 x 2 influence framework).

METHODS: Data were captured from N=22 female coaches through a brief online questionnaire administered through SurveyMonkey. The survey assessed determinants of, and experiences within, coaching overlaid by the 2 x 3 influence model. Participants rated the determinants they faced with regards to coaching (i.e. influential enablers and inhibitors). They also detailed how they overcame specific barriers. The final element of the survey was a 12-item questionnaire to assess female coaches perspectives on motivation and competencies across the three key behavioural domains outlined in the introduction. With two questions per area, question responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items were worded positively meaning that high scores indicated strong coverage of a theme. Scores were summed to provide an overall score (out of 60). Composite scores were also calculated at the individual, social and structural level.

RESULTS: Age ranged from 18 to 48 years with a mean age of 32 years; 95.5% (n=21/22) were white British with an average of five and a half years coaching experience. In terms of where participants coached, 54.5% (12/22) coached in just one setting and 45.5% (n=10/22) coached in at least two different settings. Overall, 31.8% (n=7/22) planned to coach for no more than one year, 13.6% (n=3/22) planned to coach for a further 2/3 years, and 54.4% (n=12/22) planned for at least five more years in coaching.

Participants' motivations to get in to coaching were grouped in to three main themes, (i) *The enjoyment of coaching and generally being active*, (ii) *Making a difference and giving back to the community*, and (iii), *Supporting their own family and children's interest*. Two main

barriers affected getting into and staying in coaching; (i) *Stigma around women football coaches* and (ii), *Managing coaching alongside other commitments.* From the 12-item battery of questions, respondents relied on the individual level attributes and qualities to overcome any barriers they faced to get in to coaching. The least reliable layer of influence for female coaches was at the social level. Overall, 59.1% (n=13/22) of participants relied on help from just one layer of influence, 22.7% (n=5/22) used two layers and 18.2% (n=4/22) used all three layers.

Participants reported their overall experiences of coaching football; 45.5% (n=10/22) found it 'better than expected, 36.4% (n=8/22) endorsed 'just as expected' and 18.2% (n=4/22) ticked 'worse than expected'. Interestingly, participants who reported being able to rely on all three layers of influence reported a 'better than expected' response. In contrast, this score was reported by just 38.5% (n=5/13) who relied on only one layer of influence.

Using the 12-item influence questionnaire, the average summative score of 43.8 (out of 60) suggested a rounded profile of influence for participant's experiences of coaching football. Nevertheless, with 16 'missing' points (i.e., 60-43.8) there is potential to improve support by almost one third. The highest scores were found among female coaches who (i) overcame barriers to coaching using more than one layer of influence, (ii) reported at least five years' experience and (ii) coached in more than one setting.

SUMMARY: Given the relatively small sample size, it is important that these results are treated with an air of caution as the findings may not be generalizable to the wider female coaching population. Nevertheless, this work has shown that female coaches rely most on the individual influences to overcome any barriers. Given that the principle barriers appear to be located within the social layer of influence, it would make sense to focus any change efforts there. Within the current system, coaches who can utilise all three layers of influence, have experience and coach in more than one domain generally report the best experiences. The challenge is to find the vital behaviours and identify the high leverage actions that develop predictably repeatable and effective strategies to motivate and enable a positive and engaged female coaching workforce.

LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

1: Introduction

An influential female coaching workforce is likely to be crucial in helping to improve current levels of engagement with football among children – especially girls. Nevertheless, female coaches may face considerable barriers when attempting to get into coaching and engage interventions like 'Nottingham City of Football' (NCoF). Many behavioural factors are likely to influence this engagement, therefore understanding female coaches' motivations and competencies across these factors is paramount. Personal experience of success and failure are likely to influence expectations of future engagement in coaching. Moreover, these experiences are often shaped by factors external to an individual coach.

Effective coaching structures need to build and support a system that develops positive emotions and resilient coaches. In essence, behaviour has three layers of influence, (i) Individual, (ii) Social and (iii) Structural. We can influence behaviour by changing motivation and competency across these structural aspects - leaving six areas of influence. The key here is to clarify measurable results, find preferred approaches, and analyse the six sources of influence. Most change efforts are unsuccessful because they don't focus on the vital behaviours or identify crucial moments when the right choices matter. Moreover, while each area of influence is important one shouldn't be championed at the expense of another.

Figure 1: The Six Sources of Influence
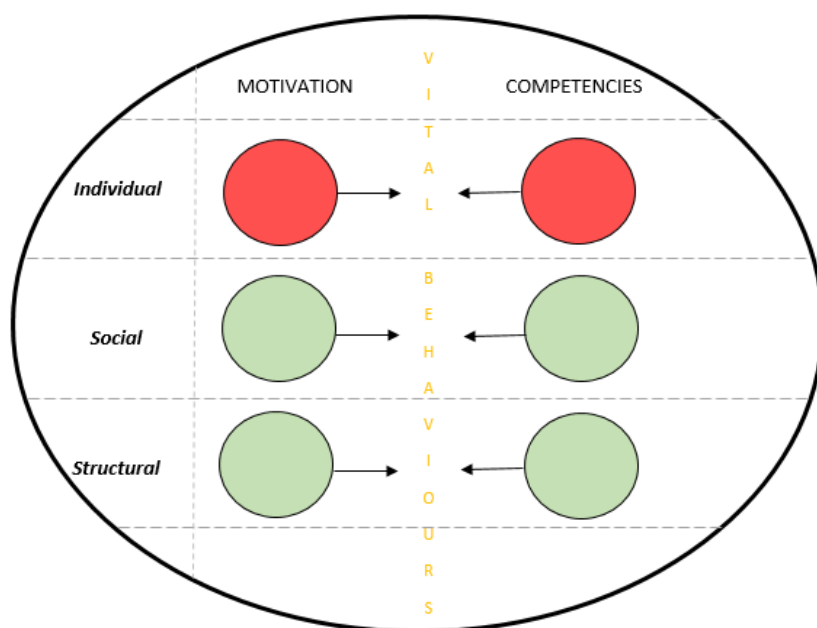
2: Methodology

This section summarises the methodology employed for this piece of work and sits within the overall programme evaluation. NCoF aims to increase football participation among groups that don't traditionally engage in new and interesting ways. To do this requires a coaching workforce that is equipped to deal with the demands of a target audience who will typically be inactive and/or female. This piece of work aims to answer the following research questions from a group of female football coaches:

1. *What are the participant's experiences of coaching football?*
2. *How do the areas of influence affect female coaches?*

Data Capture: Following clearance from the Leeds Beckett University research ethics committee, a non-probability sample of female coaches were invited to engage the research in February 2017. Data were captured through a brief online questionnaire administered through SurveyMonkey. The survey sought to assess female coaches' determinants too and experiences of coaching overlaid by the areas of influence model.

Data Analysis: To help address the research questions, female coaches were asked to report details of their demographic background and coaching practice. In addition, these participants were asked about the determinants they faced with regards to coaching (i.e. the influential enablers and inhibitors that influence their coaching experience). Moreover, they were asked a series of questions about how they overcame any barriers they faced. The final element of the survey was a 12-item questionnaire to assess female coaches perspectives on motivation and competencies across the three behavioural domains outlined in the introduction. Two questions for each area. Each question was scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items were worded positively meaning that high scores indicated strong coverage of a theme. Scores were summed to provide an overall score (out of 60). Composite scores were also calculated at the individual, social and structural level.

Survey data were cleaned and inputted into the statistical software package SPSS (v21) for analysis. Percentages were calculated from the total number of valid answers given for a question. In addition to generating descriptive statistics, inferential analyses were conducted (where appropriate) to explore the relationship between variables of interest.

3: Results

3.i Demographics of the Respondents:

In total N=22 female coaches completed the on-line survey and provided valid data. Data on age was provided by n=17 participant's. Age ranged from 18 – 48 years with a mean age of 32 (±10.4) years. Regarding ethnicity, data were provided by n=22 participants 95.5% of whom (n=21/22) were white British, 4.5% (n=1/22) were black British.

3.ii Coaching Background:

Data concerning participants football coaching background was provided by all n=22 participants. Participants coaching experience ranged from five months to 20 years. On average, participants had been coaching for around five and a half years. Moreover, 81.8% (n=18/22) reported that they were currently coaching football and 18.2% (n=4/22) reported that they were not currently coaching football. In terms of where the participants coached (Figure 2), data showed that 54.5% (12/22) coached in just one setting, of which local community clubs were the most frequently reported, 36.4% (n=8/22). The remaining 45.5% (n=10/22) of participants coached in at least two different settings; schools and local community clubs were the most frequently reported combination of settings, 22.7% (n=5/22).

Figure 2: Number of Settings Participants Coach At
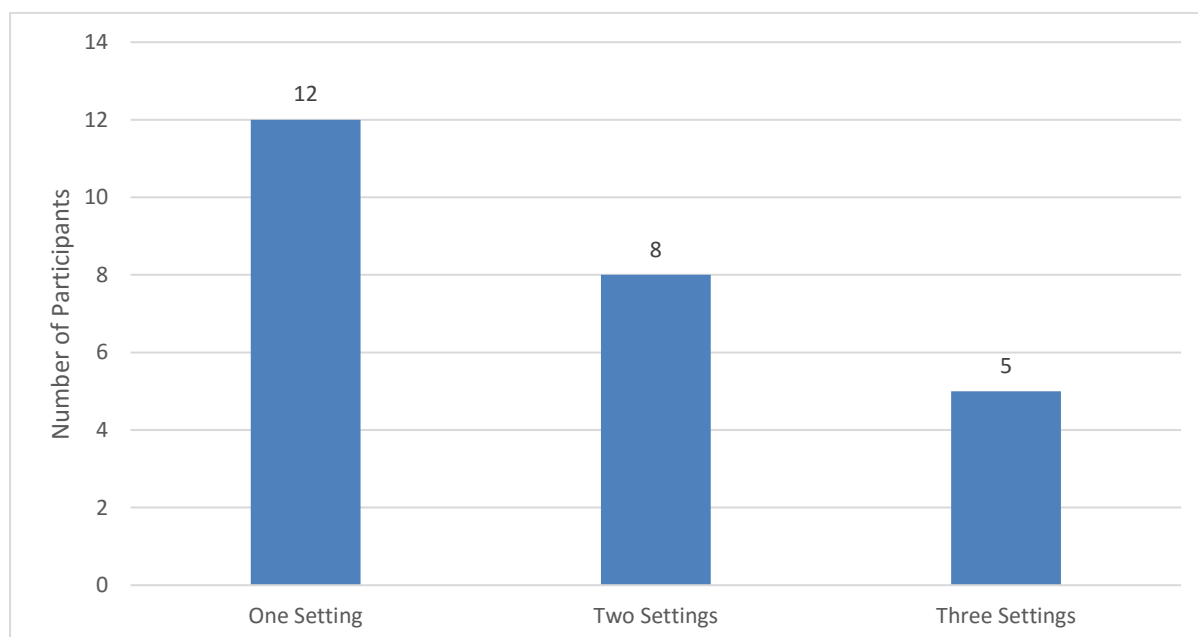
3.iii Coaching Determinants:

The coaches were asked to describe the influential enablers and inhibitors that determined their motivations and barriers to coaching. Data were provided by n=22 participants. Firstly, participants were asked *"What motivated you to get in to coaching football?"* There were a range of responses regarding motivations for coaching which could be grouped in to 3 main themes.

1. **The enjoyment of playing/coaching football and generally being active.**

   "I enjoyed playing and when I could not progress any further I got in to coaching"

2. **Making a difference and giving back to the community.**

"I wanted to give back to a coaching community that helped me achieve my potential"

3. **Supporting their own family and children's interest.**

   "My daughter wanted to play and there were no local teams so set one up"

Understanding these motivations are essential for designing strategies to help female coaches overcome any barriers that they may face to continue their journey. At present it appears that motivations for coaching largely stem from the individual layer of influence.

In terms of the barriers to coaching, the participants were asked *"What barriers have you had to overcome to get in to coaching?"* For this question there were a range of responses that could be grouped in to two main themes.

1. ***Stigma around women football coaches.***

"Being female in a male environment, lack of confidence and being judged by males"

"Sexism and comments about being a female within the football world"

"Male attitudes to football and CPD involvement"

2. ***Managing coaching alongside other commitments.***

   "The challenge of balancing being a mum and a wife with being a coach"

The barrier around 'stigma' was the most prominent inhibitor to coaching reported by the participants. Many of the female coaches surveyed suggested that attitudes and opinions expressed towards them had a negative influence on their coaching experience. Based on the responses, it could be inferred that these barriers stem from the social and structural layers of influence. This suggests that these areas are where changes need to be made to overcome the barriers experiences by female coaches.

3.iv Overcoming Barriers to Coaching:

Participants were asked how they had managed to overcome any barriers experienced with regards to coaching. Valid data were provided by n=22 female coaches. Using the sources of influence model, 63.6% (n=14/22) of female coaches reported overcoming barriers using individual motivation and competencies, effectively relying on their own initiative. In total, 54.4% (n=12/22) of female coaches overcame barriers through structural motivation and competencies utilising help from a supportive football system. Just 40.9% (n=9/22) of female coaches overcame barriers using social motivation and competencies utilising support from friends and family. Overall, there were 59.1% (n=13/22) of participants relying on help from one layer of influence, 22.7% (n=5/22) from two layers and 18.2% (n=4/22) from three.

3.iv Participants Overall Experience of Coaching Football:

Participants were asked to rate their overall experience of coaching football, valid data were provided by n=22 female coaches. Data revealed that 18.2% (n=4/22) of female coaches reported their experience as worse than they expected, 36.4% (n=8/22) reported that their experience was just as they expected it to be and 45.5% (n=10/22) reported that their experience was better than they expected it to be.

Figure 3: Participants overall experience of coaching football
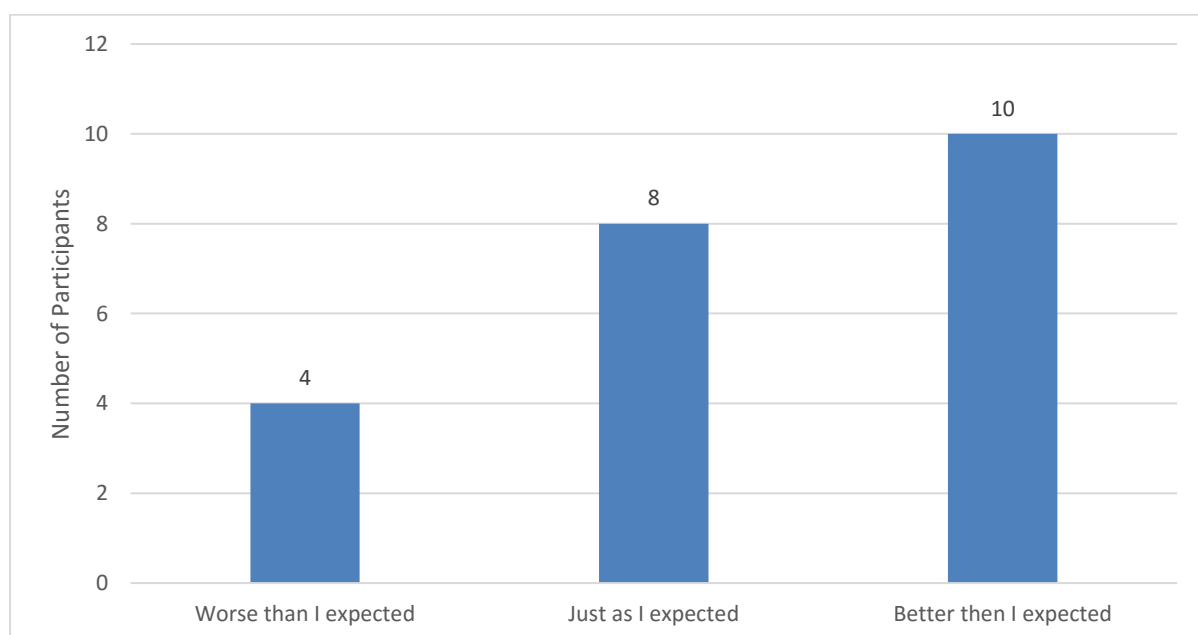
Participants reporting that their experiences were worse than they expected cited reasons such as …"*I find the sexism is by far worse than I imagined*"…"*Didn't get much support*"… for why this was the case. For those participants reporting that their experiences were as expceted, reasons such as…"*I was aware*"…"*Football is a predominantly male dominated world, so I knew there would be challenges for being a girl.*"… were cited. This suggests that although the experience was as expected, they were not expecting a great experience from the outset. For those participants who reported a better experience than expected, reasons such as …"*Ive had some wonderful opportunities presented, including working abroad*"…"*More acceptance than expected*"…"*I am enjoying being a coach, it has given me a sense of worth*"… were cited. Some of these reasons seem like resonable expectations from a job rather than an illustration of exemplar practice.

Looking at the layers of influence participants could rely on to overcome bariers split by their overall experience, an interesting pattern emerges. All the participants, 100%, who reported that they could rely on all three layers of influence to overcome barriers to coaching reported a better coaching experience than expected. Contrast that to participants reporting only one layer of influence to rely on, only 38.5% (n=5/13) of these female coaches reported an experience that was better than expected.

3.vi Length of Time Participants Plan to Coach for:

Participants were asked how long they planned to continue coaching for, data were provided by n=22 female coaches. Overall, 31.8% (n=7/22) planned to coach for no more than one year, citing reasons such as "*I no longer get any enjoyment from it*". There were 13.6% (n=3/22) planning to coach for 2/3 more years, they cited reasons such as "*Not sure with my age and my sons disabilities*". Finally, 54.4% (n=12/22) planned to coach for at least five more years. This group gave reasons such as…"*At the moment I can't see my life without doing some sort of coaching and helping young people*"…"*I want this to be my career, developing through the stages/levels as far as I can go*".

3.vii Overall Sources of Influence for Female Coaches:

Using the 12 item influence questionnaire, valid date were provided by n=21 participants. In summary, the average score was 43.8 out of 60 for the female coaches providing data. At the individual level the average score was 16.1 out of 20, at the social level it was 15.1 and at the structural level it was 14.7. These results suggests a broadly rounded profile of influence for participants experiences of coaching football. Nevertheless, it also suggests that across the board there is potential to improve theses female coaches' experiences by about a third.

Moreover, although the differences were not statistically significant, total scores for the sources of influence were greater for coaches who planned to continue coaching for at least five more years (47.3) compared to those who didn't (43.9) t [19] =-1.145, p>.05, for coaches who's experiences were better than expected (47.9) compared to those who's were as expected or worse (44.0) t [19] =1.323, p>.05, for participants who had been coaching for at least five years (48.4) compared to those who had been coaching less than five years (43.6) t [19] =1.690, p>.05, and for participants who coached in more than one setting (48.4) compared to those who coached in just one (43.6) t [19] =1.690, p>.05. The largest difference – which was statistically significant - in total score for the sources of influence was found among female coaches who overcame barriers to coaching using more than one layer of influence (50.3) compared to those who used just one (42.5) t [19] =3.087, p<.05. This is graphically represented in the figures below. For an optimal experience of coaching, the shaded area should extend to the edge of the triangle for each domain.

Figure 4: Overall Influence & Overcoming Barriers