



Tips for Coaching Girls

Recruiting Girls

Strategies:

- Get girls to recruit others
- Get girls' parents to recruit
- Have female coaches/role models involved and visible within your team
- Take time to thoroughly address girls' parents' concerns
- Trust that if you have a good program for girls, it will grow over time!

Keeping Girls on your Team

Strategies:

- Create a culture of support and camaraderie
- Check in with the girls on a regular basis
- Keep tabs on how each girl is doing
- Make an effort to connect with girls' parents/guardians
- Have female coaches/role models involved and visible within your team
- Set girls up for success (bikes, ride choices, etc.)
- Give specific feedback to help her improve
- Guide them in defining specific measurable and attainable goals (i.e. getting in and out of pedals smoothly, uphill starts, steady cadence, anticipate shifting, changing a flat)

Co-Ed Groups

Strategies:

- Look out for the girls
- Mediate maleness: Challenge the idea that "boys will be boys."
- Encourage and direct girls to follow behind a skilled boy to see new lines
- Encourage and direct girls to lead on the trail
- Reframe comments that insinuate that girls are not as strong, fast, etc.
- Support girls-only rides, clinics, and camps
- Allow girls to practice new skills on their own or in small groups away from boys



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Coaches' Conduct

Strategies:

- Be an ally to girls
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Maintain a “hands-off” policy
- Watch your words (avoid using condescending language)
- Avoid being alone with individual girls
- Build trust gradually
- Respect girls' comfort zones
- Be patient: It's a process!

Body Image & Self Esteem

Strategies:

- Avoid body/image comments
- Compliment girls' strengths and character, not their looks
- Encourage good nutrition
- Understand the cultural forces girls are up against
- Be prepared to quell myths:
 - weight training makes women bulky
 - suppression of the menstrual cycle is “normal” for female athletes
- Give genuine praise and encouragement!

Girls' Social & Emotional Needs

Strategies:

- Allow girls to have rituals
- Understand the importance of relationships
- Don't be afraid of tears
- Watch out for social dynamics and intervene when necessary
- Don't baby girls



Tips for Coaching Girls

- Encourage girls to take risks
- Honor girls when they say “no”
- Be aware that competition may not be an intrinsic motivator outline other goals for them
- Provide lots of specific positive feedback, notice if the athlete responds better to private encouragement, refrain from pointing them out
- Often girls have more performance anxiety than boys, perfectionism

Female Athlete Health Issues

- Female Athlete Triad (http://kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness/sports/triad.html#)
 - One or more of disordered eating, amenorrhea, and osteoporosis
- Symptoms:
 - Anemia
 - Weight loss or binge purge cycles
 - Irregular or no menstrual cycle
 - Stress fractures
 - Muscle injuries
 - Delayed injury healing time
 - Hair loss
 - Dry skin
 - Cold hands and feet
 - Fatigue and decreased ability to concentrate
 - Depression, mood changes
- Menstrual cycle may cause temporary fatigue, decreased balance, and/or emotional sensitivity
- Knee injuries as a result of poor fit and Q-angle