

**The Importance of Female  
Coaching?  
Or  
The Importance of having a  
Woman on the National Team**

**...ARE THESE THE CORRECT QUESTIONS? Or...AM I THE RIGHT PERSON TO ASK?!**

Ben Titley



# LINDA KIEFER

- **Safe Sport...now need to have a female...either Coach or Support Staff**
- **Safe Sport...lets face it...men can be 'hamstrung' with having tough conversations with women athletes. Maybe a woman can tread less carefully.**
- **Women can see things a little differently, and can notice things differently...Mothers intuition? Not necessarily better...but different.**
- **Women on IST Staff is 100% necessary. Need option of male or female therapists**
- **Female athletes feel more comfortable talking about certain issues (menstration, relationships etc) with women rather than men.**
- **CAUTION...don't select a woman just for having a female on staff. They have to bring something to the team. They have to be valuable in a Role. Can be to be mentored (as have done in the past)...but they still need a skill set and a role**

# Monica Solana-Tramunt

- I don't know if we should talk about teams made up of men and women instead of talking about profiles of people. Honestly, I think that gender is not what contributes to a work team, but rather the qualities or abilities of its members, whether they are men or women.
- Perhaps the profiles most associated with women are profiles related to a certain capacity for observation, communication and empathy, a lot of empathy. Women are also assumed to have some ability to understand the “ups and downs” of other women due to menstruation. Some women have the ability to perceive certain moods of athletes that can condition training, and have the ability to talk and listen to athletes at times when other male members of the staff cannot or do not want to.
- On the other hand, there are other necessary qualities in some of the members of the national team that have to be covered (either by a man or a woman). I am referring to the ability to encourage, activate, motivate athletes and also to have a stable and friendly state of mind most of the time, it is important that athletes have someone from the team, who is not necessarily a psychologist or psychologist, to overturn some of their extra-sports concerns, a "friendly" face with whom to talk about issues that they would never discuss with the coach but that they need to express at some point. This is especially important in athletes who are training away from their closest family or friends.
- In short, as I said at the beginning, I do not believe that the number of women or men are the important factors in a team, but that the roles played by each member of the staff are well balanced and distributed among the team members. Somehow, in my case, I am used to acting as a "good cop" but always with the same objective as the rest of the staff, and this is to improve the performance of the athletes under our charge





# Melanie Marshall

- **Ultimately it is an issue, I wish it wasn't...but it is. Strong message from her is seen as different than from Male Peer.**
- **Sometimes feels has to use a Male peer to express her message to key decision makers to feel like she gets her voice heard.**
- **BUT...its not an excuse...need to crack on and push yourself forward...don't wait for your ship to come in...swim out to it.**
- **Important to make sure its not about Men & Women...its about Standards and what you can offer...and what you can offer people is good enough to be nonnegotiable**
- **THE CONTINUUM IS IMPORTANT...Male way of doing things and Female ways of doing things...a great system pushes its workforce to stretch across the whole continuum**
- **I.e. Men must be able to employ what you would class as female Leadership skills...Listening, Empathy, Showing emotion, Caring, Nurturing**
- **AND**
- **Women should be able to do what some would class as Masculine traits...setting direction, being clear, providing dicipline,holding people to account, having challenging conversations**
- **A great workforce has all its staff be able to stretch across those elements of Coaching & Leadership**
- **SYSTEMS must progress to consider that a diverse set of perspectives are needed in order to harness High Performance**
- **SYSTEMS must be brave enough to stop the discussion about Gender and look honstly at who has the best processes, principles, ability, talent & attitude**



# Conclusions

- **Don't have females on staff just because they are female**
- **Skill Set & Standards still apply**
- **Great female coaches or staff can bring an essential perspective**
- **Short term fast-track...Mentorship positions...but have a role**
- **The 'Pendulum' Problem**
- **Support Staff positions necessary as a minimum**
- **Create platforms where Female input & perspective is encouraged**
- **Balanced Staff skill set is most important, irrespective of Gender**
  
- **Thoughts? Thankyou!**