

Observations on Female Motivation

The following article provides two perspectives on female motivation. The first comes from a female sports psychologist- Gloria Balague. The second is from an executive leadership journal. Following these are some tips about coaching girls from Wayzata youth girls coach Doug Bowdish.

“ When I work with women athletes, relatedness often arises as an important motivational element. Most of the women I speak with will talk about the importance of their relationship with their coach. The personal relationship seems to be the central concern, as is having a group of teammates where they feel a sense of belonging. Often they feel that their coaches did not understand the relatedness they need, resulting in frustration for all parties concerned.

A specific example of this has been my work with elite gymnasts at the national level They have complained to me about coaches who paid more attention to them (because of their performance excellence) and ignored or paid less attention to other gymnasts at the club where they trained. This source of stress results in a climate of tension and blame for something that is beyond their control. These young girls were looking for good relationships and feelings between all the gymnasts and felt undermined by the differential treatment of the coaches. “

From an Executive Leadership Journal:

A study conducted on executive middle managers over a four year period found that males were much more driven by the prospect of furthering their careers, while female executives were primarily more concerned with co-worker and customer relations.

Once they reached a higher level in their careers, men and women differed. Men defined success by the rewards of their position or prestige of their company. Women gave more thought to being empowered and have supervisors who helped them with their career development. They put a high

emphasis on fostering positive relationships with co-workers and clients they interacted with.

Both pieces from; *Championship Performance Newsletter*.

Doug Bowdish offers these tips for coaching girls:

Coaching Girls:

- Girls want to please their coaches. A coach who has the ability to praise, constructively criticize and challenge girls all at the same time will find tremendous success in developing over-achieving athletes.
- Girls want to work hard. My experience is that girls feel a much higher degree of satisfaction and sense of accomplishment when they are physically challenged. This is not to say they should be subjected to senseless conditioning drills, but rather exposed to high tempo, fast paced practice plans. This type of routine will have a tremendous positive impact on their confidence.
- Girls want to know. Being prepared and effectively communicating plans and expectations are important parts of getting the most out of female athletes. Letting them be a part of the planning process isn't a bad idea either – they want ownership and a good coach should want buy-in.
- Girls play for their teammates – there are always selfish players, but I have found this to be less the case with girls than it is with boys. Girls are more likely to cheer their teammates and be happy for the success of each others accomplishments. Girls stick up for each other and don't like being overly singled out, positive or negative. No pedestals, no gutters.
- Girls have a strong sense of personal responsibility. If you address a group of girls and generalize a specific topic, most girls will think you are speaking about them, whereas most boys might think you're speaking about someone else.

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