

Inspiring participation and maximising performance of cricket coaches and players

HITTING THE SEAM



The Official Magazine of the ECB Coaches Association

ISSUE 37

As the World Cup arrives

We look ahead to a massive summer of cricket





CHANGE THE GAME

St George's Park, October 28-29, 2017

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL INVITATION TO THIS UNMISSABLE EVENT

Welcome to Hitting the Seam 37!

The Women's World Cup is nearly upon us!

2017 is shaping up to be an exciting year for everyone. The imminent ICC Women's World Cup and Champions Trophy, a tri-series for England Learning Disability, the launch of All Stars Cricket, a National Conference and further developments to icoachcricket all contribute to More Play, Great Teams and Inspired Fans.

In this issue our focus is on women's and girls' cricket from the top of the game to grass roots and the legacy the World Cup will leave behind after 23rd July.

Martyn Kiel, ECB Coach Development Manager



Women's Coaching Conferences: Evolving every year

1 Women's Coaching Conference in 2016

3 conferences in 2017, with **120** delegates.

29th January – Myerscough College, Preston

11th February – Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham

21st January – Hertfordshire Sports Village, Hatfield

Featuring

Lydia Greenway
Kate Cross
Barbara Daniels
Lisa Pagett
Nicky Fuller
Jane Booth
and
Tony Robson

'In terms of coach development and investing in people, this has been a huge step forward in laying the foundations for what I am sure will be a sign of things to come through Cricket Unleashed, our new strategy, which highlights the importance and value of the women's game.' **Cookie Patel, ECB Training Manager.**

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ECB Coaches Association
Support Centre
County Cricket Ground
Edgbaston
Birmingham
Warwickshire
B5 7QX

Telephone: 0121 440 4332
Email: coaches.association@ecb.co.uk

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MAKING ~~HISTORY~~ HER STORY

As the Women's World Cup returns to these shores for the first time in 24 years, England Women's Head Coach Mark Robinson is confident his players are ready for the challenge.

‘We need to lose more!’ is not a phrase you expect to hear from someone in charge of a national team, but that’s how Mark Robinson expresses the situation facing England Women.

Robinson spoke to ECB Coach Development Manager Martyn Kiel, before he took an extended squad to Abu Dhabi for a comprehensive training camp in preparation for a tournament where expectations are sky-high for the host nation.

The opening game, on 24 June, comes over seven months after their previous competitive fixture and over eight months after their last defeat, to the West Indies in October. His willingness to be challenged is understandable then.

‘Failure is part of the game,’ Robinson explained. ‘You can’t win all the time or be happy all the time. Learning is often ugly, so let’s get things wrong, let’s be in game situations where things aren’t going to plan.’

‘We play too many one-sided games currently, so we don’t get tested. That’s an objective for us, to put more pressure on. To make better decisions under pressure is something we’re working on, but you never know where you are with that until you’re in a pressure situation.’

Pressure is certainly not new to the former Sussex coach, who has been at the helm during a pioneering time in the women’s game. His appointment came a year and a half after the introduction of central contracts, a massive leap forward for women’s cricket but a challenge for this generation of trailblazers.

‘Professionalism has allowed us to have more time with them, it has allowed them to dedicate more time to training, but it is a case of coming to terms with what it means – the accountability. They are judged now, so they must train, be fit and perform.’



‘We’ve tried to take the fear of failure away, which is a difficult thing in professional sport. We’ve tried to free the girls up to express themselves.’

‘You don’t just make them professional and expect them to be 100 times better all of a sudden though. These girls are pioneers, the first group of female professionals. They don’t have senior players around who have got the t-shirt – the experience with the press for example. That means sometimes we have tears, along with joy, but that’s one of the reasons I’m here, to help the players understand the good and bad of professionalism.’

Managing the emotional rollercoaster of elite sport is a key part of Robinson’s job and one that he’s been building an understanding of in the women’s game since observing his daughter at Sussex.

‘Having her play and love the game did bring me to women’s cricket and made me look at the struggles that female players face. That’s changing now – counties are supporting far more and are bringing the right people in to quicken that change.’

‘Working with my daughter gave me greater empathy in terms of seeing how female players tend to beat themselves up far more than male players, and can at times take it more

personally.

‘In their own eyes what they do is often not good enough and it’s being around my daughter and speaking to people close to her that I came to understand that before I even started working with the national team. I now spend a lot of time trying to normalise feelings and behaviours with my players.’

Emotions will be heightened as hosts, but Robinson is intent on using that to spur on the team, not as an excuse for poor performance.

‘I relish these global events and there’s no bigger than a home World Cup. There is a sense of pressure though, in terms of eyes on us, so we need to embrace all that while understanding that the girls will be feeling that added scrutiny.’

‘Managing our own emotions around the tournament will be the biggest challenge. We’ve got to embrace all the well-wishing, rather than let it overpower us. We can use it as an advantage.’

From the opening game, the pressure – and excitement – will be something for us all to embrace.



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THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

As the Director of England Women's Cricket, few can see the lay of the land like Clare Connor. As she tells Martyn Kiel, it's a sight worth taking in.

'What we need to do is do everything in our power to promote and create opportunities for female coaches in the game.'

'The women's game is unrecognisable from 1993,' begins Clare, recalling women's cricket in England after the last home World Cup.

'We won the tournament, then played virtually no cricket for two years. So we had the huge high of winning a home World Cup, then no cricket to build on that, to keep that team together and performing at that level.

'Compare that to the 2009 Women's World Twenty20 semi-final England won, when we chased down 164 in front of the world's media. Look at the power-hitting ability shown in that game, and the coverage it got.'

With a nine-year international career under her belt – ending in

2005 with over 100 caps to her name – followed by 10 years leading England Women's Cricket, Clare's is a voice worth listening to.

So when she emphasises the 'exciting momentum around the profile of the game,' or warns of 'entrenched attitudes needing to be changed,' they can be considered closer to facts than opinions.

Take her view on the upcoming World Cup: 'It gives us more opportunities to talk about the women's game, to talk to girls and women with the new soft ball project for example – a new activity that we can hook on to the World Cup, to normalise the sport among women and girls.



'Later in the summer we'll have the second year of the Kia Super League (KSL), which can do a similar job, as we saw last year. There was a great quality of cricket, the average attendance at the group stage was over 1000, which was fantastic, and this year we've got better coverage on Sky and BBC. Next year it will expand, doubling the number of group stage games.'

If Clare is seeing those opportunities, you can be sure it's there and that the game won't be letting it pass.

Similarly, her praise for England Women's Head Coach Mark Robinson will be one steeped in consideration and experience. 'He's brought a different lens over from the men's game,' Clare reveals.

'He's developed the existing Olympic values, of togetherness, into a ruthlessness, the ability to give critical feedback to each other. He's got this balance of compassion with toughness which is perfect for that situation.

'The contacts he's developed in the men's game have allowed him to bring in people like James Kirtley, Tom Smith, Gareth Breese,

Michael Bates, Carl Hopkinson, John Stanworth – new, fresh-thinking coaches with experiences that Robbo sees are required.

'He's created a step-change in perception, with his acceptance of the role showing the coaching profession that a high-profile, county coach saw a job in women's cricket as being a good step to take.'

With the KSL offering a comparable level of women's cricket to a wider number of coaches, the women's game is becoming more attractive to all levels of cricket coaches. Won't that limit the opportunities for female coaches?

'I'm a big champion of inclusivity in cricket, and I recognise that we need to be proactive in making the sport more accessible, like we are doing with All Stars Cricket and young children.

'The question of coaching role models is a tricky one because we want young female coaches to be able to see a path for them, like men can, to the highest level of the game.

'What we need to do is do everything in our power to

promote and create opportunities for female coaches in the game. The recent women's coaching conferences have helped with that, and shows the kinds of things we can do to recruit and retain female coaches at the grass-roots level.'

For coaches at that level, it's an exciting time to be working in women's and girls' cricket. Female coaches may be currently in the minority, but with the Chance to Shine project revealing recently that 55 per cent of their participants at secondary school are female, it's a fast-growing area for the sport. Not that Clare is in any doubt about the work that is yet to be done.

'There will be some quick wins, some actions that we can take within the next six months, but there are also some longer, cultural, historical transformations that need to happen. Looking at All Stars Cricket though, the way that's being presented and communicated, that will hopefully be a huge influence on mums and on local deliverers.

'The same will be true of the men's eight-team Twenty20 competition from 2020, with a focus on families and being able to have a competition on free-to-air TV.'

2020, and the opportunities that will bring, may seem like a long way off. If it's part of Clare Connor's vision though, you can be sure no stone will be left unturned in the push for the relevancy of cricket to women.

'The ultimate vision for us is to make cricket as relevant to women as it is to men, which is a long-term goal. We are starting by looking at ECB. Once we've established the state of play, we are devising a plan that we'll roll out for the year, which will eventually put us in a strong position to get towards that vision.'



THE SUPPORT NETWORK

Attracting more female coaches to cricket is vital for the game, and the advice from one emerging village club is simple: give them your support.

Buried in deepest Buckinghamshire, Dinton CC has a history of girls' cricket similar to that of many small clubs: flashes of success thanks to enthusiastic parents and strong groups of friends.

Now home to a growing, organised girl's section, they've recognised that female coaches bring something distinctive, valuable and worth investing in.

Dinton's Briony Brock, Hannah Fisher and Mike Sutliff took time out from filming for All Stars Cricket to speak to ECB Coach Development Manager, Martyn Kiel.

Briony is in her early 20s, a lapsed player returning to volunteer as a coach with the budding girls' section. She had no coaching experience when she came back to Dinton, but she had something impossible to teach: an understanding of why playing cricket as a young girl is a unique experience.

'There are inherent feelings about gender that are tough to hear. For example when I ask a girl if they want to bat, they say "oh ok, but I'm rubbish," which is exactly what I would have said at that age!

'I know those underlying feelings are in me and it's a battle to generate the confidence I need to overcome all that. Men and boys tend to be better at projecting confidence so it's a challenge to guide girls into being confident in that way.

'I was on a coaching course recently and there were lots of comments like, "so is it the girls' section you coach?" That kind of attitude is clearly frustrating but it's nice at Dinton because people aren't like that. They understand the importance of exposing kids to mixed cricket.'

Hannah, another young coach at Dinton, recalls similar frustrations but maintains that cutting through that is a battle worth taking on.



Dinton CC coaches Briony Brock (left), Hannah Fisher and Mike Sutliff

'I find it challenging when some of the boys I coach don't want to listen because I'm a girl; they seem to find it harder respecting a female coach. That's a real challenge because you want to change that perspective but it's obviously set-in. Having support from other coaches is important, and for the boys to see the performances of female cricketers is a big step.'

From the point of view of Mike, Dinton's junior co-ordinator, having young female coaches like Hannah and Briony is important for generating an atmosphere that encourages young players of all kinds to join the club.

'Players coming to cricket should be seeing the potential of girls. I want my son to recognise that girls can be incredible players. The traditional image of the men playing and women making the tea is horribly outdated.

'If we're going to create a true family atmosphere here then everyone needs to participate. I think it's really important to have role models, people like Hannah and Briony who are young adults, who provide a great model: they are enthusiastic, they invest time.

'They offer elements of personal development that most experienced cricketers can't, things like confidence and empathy with teammates. They have a unique skill set that we can't do without.'

Once clubs have created an environment to bring in female coaches, what can we do to make the most of them?

'We can support, encourage, value them, give them access to the coaching courses and help them to be the best coach they can be. That doesn't mean coaching at county level - there's a perception that a good coach must coach elite squads. That's not true.

'The coach that gives a 15-year-old the confidence to stay in the game is of real value, as is the one who can instill a love for the game in the 12-year-old who is struggling to find their place in the world. That's the kind of thing Hannah and Briony are far more successful at than a failed county pro.

'Clubs need to be flexible, to understand what else will be going on in their world, to provide an environment where people want to spend time. A place their friends will want to come to. We should always be open to discussions about other things they may want to experience - travel perhaps, or coaching a different sport.

'We can't just rely on who we've got now either. We can be looking at our 14-year-olds and offering them opportunities to work towards coaching, creating a sustainable club where we are building young coaches and young role models.'

A NEW CHAPTER

When Lydia Greenway started to play cricket, she didn't even know an elite England Women's team existed!



© Action Images

Now 31, having retired from international cricket as a World Cup and World Twenty20 winner and a five-time Ashes winner, Lydia Greenway is looking to inspire the next generation of female cricketers.

Since her England retirement in June 2016, the middle-order batter, known for her fielding, has been working on establishing Cricket for Girls. It is intended to offer relevant and appealing coaching to women and girls of all ages and abilities, from novices to talented players looking to take the next step.

'At the top of the pyramid we have the academies, which are aimed at club and county cricketers who just want to develop and improve their game - that would be a longer training programme over six to eight weeks, where they get specialist coaching,' she explains. 'As well as that, we have masterclasses with England players, open to all players of all ages and abilities. It's an opportunity to come along and work with an England player, learn from them, and learn how they train. We have day camps, us going to clubs and running more of a fun day where there's lots of skills, lots of games, and

then a mini-World Cup in the afternoon for them to play in amongst themselves.'

As demand increases and Cricket for Girls grows, Greenway is fortunate that she can call on her former England teammates - Laura Marsh and Jenny Gunn were two of the first to come on-board.

'The young girls who might just be getting into the game for the first time, they might be players who want to go on and play for England themselves, so I think for them to be able to be coached by some of the England girls is really good,' says Greenway.

Marsh is pleased to be able to help out her old pal. 'I'm really glad I've got the opportunity to go down and help out and coach some of the young girls,' she says. 'It's important, growing up, to have role models, and hopefully that's the kind of role that us England players can have in academies like Lydia's.'

Lydia feels incredibly strongly about ensuring that girls have role models to show them their dreams are achievable.

'I think it's just brilliant for young girls growing up to have a coach

and a female role model to look up to. I know that female cricket coaches are often few and far between, so I'm trying to provide more role models and make it much more accessible.'

Marsh agrees, adding: 'When we grew up playing cricket, we didn't necessarily have female role models in the game to look up to, so the more we can do to get involved at grass-roots level and promote the game and inspire young kids, the better the game will be moving forward.'

'Women's sport as a whole in the last few years has done brilliantly. It's great that the media have jumped on that as well and really got behind it. I think we definitely have a role to play in that, and if we can give back and help to coach, and inspire young girls not just through our performances but through coaching, then that's really powerful too.'

Marsh thinks that female coaches can teach, inspire and support female players in a way that a male equivalent might not quite understand.

'There are differences in the game between men and women's cricket,' she says, 'and I suppose being female players we

understand the type of game we play, so it's helpful to pass that on to young girls. We can talk to them about things they might come up against, being female in a male-dominated sport. Even though it's changing, there still might be girls playing in boys' teams at school or in club teams. They might come up against different challenges - that's certainly something we've all been through.'

She does, however, pay tribute to a man who she says was her best coach ever.

'If I had to single one of my coaches out, it would be Jack Birkenshaw,' says Marsh, naming the former England all-rounder, who later became a respected umpire as well as a coach. 'He developed me as a spinner and we worked really closely together for a number of years and had a really good relationship, which I think is important with coaches and players. To have the backing of a coach, to see it in their eyes that they want you to do well, is something that's quite special.'

When Greenway was a child, she watched her father play cricket for their local club, and he went through practices with her. In fact, she wonders whether it was him who began to hone her now-legendary fielding abilities.

'I practised fielding a lot because I enjoyed it, so my dad would just throw tennis balls at me in the evening - I had to catch them or I'd get one in between the eyes!' she laughs.

Looking back and reflecting on her own experiences, she says: 'Don't specialise too early. One thing that really helped me was playing a lot of different sports at a young age. I think that generally helps children's athleticism and agility, and all the basic movements.'

If you're coaching just girls or in a mixed group, get female coaches on-board if you can. 'Having coached all over the country in schools, clubs and counties, I now realise how important it is



Laura Marsh in the nets with former England Women's coach Mark Lane

© Action Images

for young girls to have female role models. It helps break down the barrier and perception that cricket is a boy's game.'

As her career developed, she got that England call-up - and started to meet the colleagues and coaches who shaped the rest of her career. Former captain Charlotte Edwards was one of her inspirations, along with ex-coach Mark Lane.

'I was lucky enough to work with him on a one-to-one basis,' she recalls. 'I liked how simple he kept it, so that's something I want to take into my own coaching.'

Meanwhile, she continues to balance her coaching with her continuing domestic playing career.

'During discussions with Mark Robinson about his focus on developing new players, it became clear that my

involvement with the England team might be limited moving forwards,' she said at the time. 'Whilst in the past I have been in a similar position and have fought for my place, I now feel that at this stage in my life, it's time to take a step back and retire from international cricket with immediate effect, allowing the next generation of players to develop on the world stage.'

Now, some time later, Greenway is looking to the future and planning her next moves.

'I think I'm in a transition period at the moment, to be honest,' she admits. 'I'm probably half and half, trying to make that transition from playing into coaching - and developing Cricket for Girls alongside that.'

Summer 2017 will no doubt prove to be a busy season for Lydia.

Lydia will feature at the National Conference in October.



WORLD CUP LEGACY: EAST MIDLANDS

With two World Cup venues and 15 matches, the region is primed to make the most of a once in a generation celebration of cricket.

The Women's World Cup presents a fantastic opportunity to harness the potential of Cricket Unleashed's central themes – More Play, Great Teams and Inspired Fans.

Since February, the regional team in the East Midlands has been formulating plans to harness the legacy opportunities presented by the tournament. Bristol, Taunton and Lord's have been developing their plans as hosts.

Derbyshire and Leicestershire are the region's hosts, with their 15 games including the beginning of England's campaign on 24 June against India at Derby, a match that's already sold out!

In partnership with their respective city council, county club, cricket board and the ICC, Derby (23 June) and Leicester (26 June) will host events to raise people's awareness about the global competition on their doorsteps.

Over the next two years the region will focus its efforts on making cricket more inclusive, accessible and inspiring to women and girls through innovative playing opportunities and growing relations throughout the community.

The appointment of a Women and Girls Legacy Officer demonstrates the region's commitment to implementing its plans. Jack Arnold, the region's Growth Executive, outlined the impact this role will make.

'The Legacy Officer will be liaising with the two hosts, working across the community and commercial sectors to identify new ways of growing the game.

'It's vital we use the World Cup as a tool to engage with new players and coaches, as well as celebrate and advocate the role of women in sport,' Jack explained.

Growth and retention will be targeted through development

and implementation of a plan in conjunction with Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire, and the region's Kia Super League women's team, Loughborough Lightning.

The region's plan includes the following objectives:

- Increase the number of women and girls accessing cricket-related activity
- Increase the number of women's and girls' teams
- Positively change perceptions of women's and girls' cricket
- Increase the number of female volunteers
- Connect the counties' existing and future plans to the legacy programme
- Increase the number of women and girls attending World Cup fixtures.

After the staging of three women's coaching conferences, one element of their strategy is to focus on coach development



through the creation of a regional forum for female coaches and the staging of two workshops in 2017.

‘We want this forum to represent a diverse range of individuals including players, coaches, parents, students and partners,’ said Jack. ‘This forum will then determine the nature and content of the workshops.’

Current and potential coaches will be invited to the events, which aim to develop coaching practice and highlight opportunities such as new indoor and outdoor festivals, and coaching programmes being offered in the region through the legacy plan.

Reflecting on the challenge, Jack is confident in the region’s ability to capitalise. ‘The next two years are such an exciting opportunity for women’s and girls’ cricket.

‘We hope to provide more opportunities to be involved in the game in a variety of capacities as well as challenging and changing current

perceptions of what cricket has to offer. The competition provides a tangible opportunity for the five counties within the region to collaborate, and reach new audiences over the next two years and beyond.

‘The World Cup will hopefully transform the game around Derbyshire. More women and girls will have the opportunity to participate in this wonderful game and be a part of the World Cup legacy!’

‘The Women’s World Cup is providing a huge boost to our promotion of cricket to new female audiences. We have been able to create more playing opportunities which has encouraged new players to join our local women’s clubs. We can provide incentives for players and volunteers in relation to the World Cup which will really help us add value to current and future projects.’

Tom Leonard, Cricket Development Officer – Inclusion at Leicestershire CCC

‘Being a host venue, we have a great opportunity to inspire current or new players through the great skills on show by international stars. We have always seen women and girls at the Fischer County Ground watching the men, but now they will have a chance to see players who they can relate to, and hopefully we will have the girls saying “I want to be in an England shirt one day!”’

Rachel Hopkins, Cricket Development Officer – Youth, Women and Girls



‘Over 180 festivals will take place nationwide to coincide with the ICC Women’s World Cup.’

UNLEASH THE GAME!

Tracey Francis, Head of Growth at ECB, outlines plans to develop women’s cricket in England and Wales.

‘Expect the unexpected’ will be my mantra this summer. It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity where women’s cricket will take centre stage: the ICC Women’s World Cup, season two of the Kia Super League, and a brand-new women and girls’ cricket strategy, all giving us a perfect platform for growth.

Our first commitment was to appoint a National Growth Manager for Women and Girls, and our first action was to split them off. There is no catch-all here, they are uniquely different. Our solutions need to reflect this...and so starts the journey.

It’s important that we seize the moment to showcase women in

our sport. While playing will always be a key priority, we recognise that the business of cricket is enriched by the inclusion of women as officials, coaches, leaders and administrators. Women quite often are the backbone of our sport – the unsung heroes behind the scenes. It’s time to step out of the shadows and make our mark.

Women make up 50 per cent of the population, but only 10 per cent actually play. It’s a massively untapped market. However, first we must ask ourselves this: why don’t that many women play?

We have, over the past few years, invested significant resources into understanding women much better. A common thread has appeared – women want short, safe, social and fun offers. The first cab off the rank is our Summer of Soft Ball Cricket, a bespoke offer with a culmination of playing experiences and festival days to inspire and encourage women to take up our sport.

We have to demystify our game. Its laws and conditions are complicated, we have to recognise that the equipment must be fit for purpose. Long gone are the days when it’s



acceptable for women to be playing on the edges of our grounds with equipment designed for children.

So we have unleashed the game and developed our softball format, featuring a revolutionary composite bat, for the Soft Ball Cricket campaign. Over 180 festivals will take place nationwide to coincide with the ICC Women's World Cup, attracting some 7000 female players. All will have an opportunity to attend World Cup matches through bespoke ticketing offers, competitions and a themed 'ladies day' for the finals.

The festivals alone will not truly embed women into cricket. The venue, experience, attitudes and behaviours of our workforce, volunteers and club environments will play a vital role in creating that welcoming and positive first experience of our sport. We have invested in education programmes and are working with the club networks to develop their offers, enabling them to grow their women and girls' sections.

Our investment into this area has seen significant growth. We have used some of this money to build capacity in the Kia Super League teams and

regions, creating community legacy offers which will inspire the next generation to start their lifelong involvement in our sport. We have a captive audience within primary schools and All Stars Cricket will ensure that five- to eight-year-old girls see cricket as a sport for them at a much earlier age.

We are connecting the game from grass roots to performance, and challenging ourselves at every level, putting our customer at the heart of our decision making.

So this summer, be prepared, because here come the girls!

STATE OF THE NATION

Helen Pack, ECB National Growth Manager – Women and Girls, lays out the state of play.

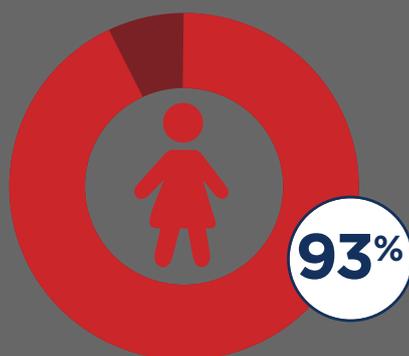
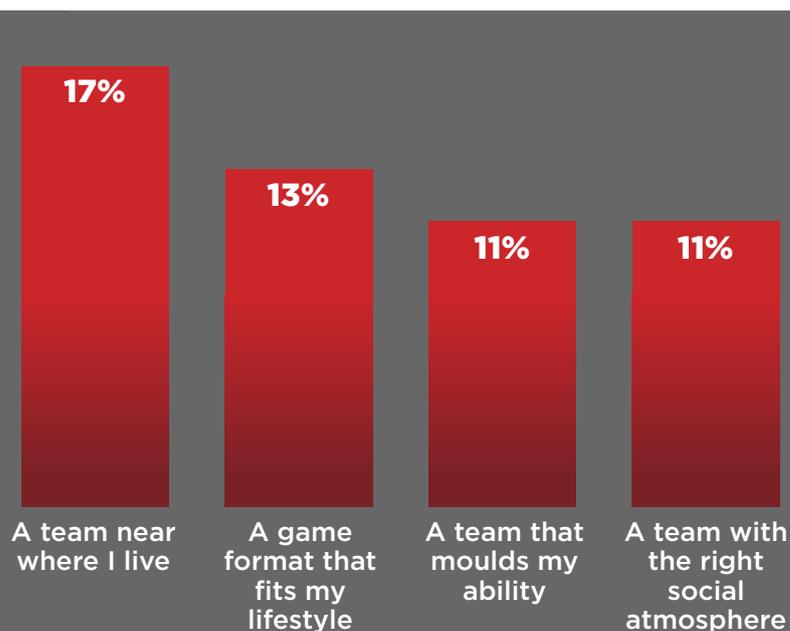
Women's sport is on the rise, from This Girl Can to sold-out Ashes games at Essex and Sussex in 2015. That year saw an 11 per cent rise in year-on-year participation in sport by women and girls, while there has been a seven-fold increase in the number of clubs offering female cricket from 2003 to 2016. Women want to engage with cricket, as players and spectators, and are looking for the right offer for them.



Women are looking for a great experience where they can improve their skills, spend time with family and friends, and generally feel good about themselves. They are looking for fun, fast, safe and social formats of the game that they can combine with other things in their life. Fundamentally, they are looking for choice. When we asked women what would bring them back to play, these were the answers they gave.

We need to look at the playing offers currently available in clubs and make sure that there is something for everyone, from soft ball festivals to hard ball 40-over leagues, to make sure that we are keeping players in the game and are also helping girls transition from school and junior offers into appropriate open-age experiences.

What would bring lapsed female players back to their cricket club?



of female players see coaching as essential to their participation

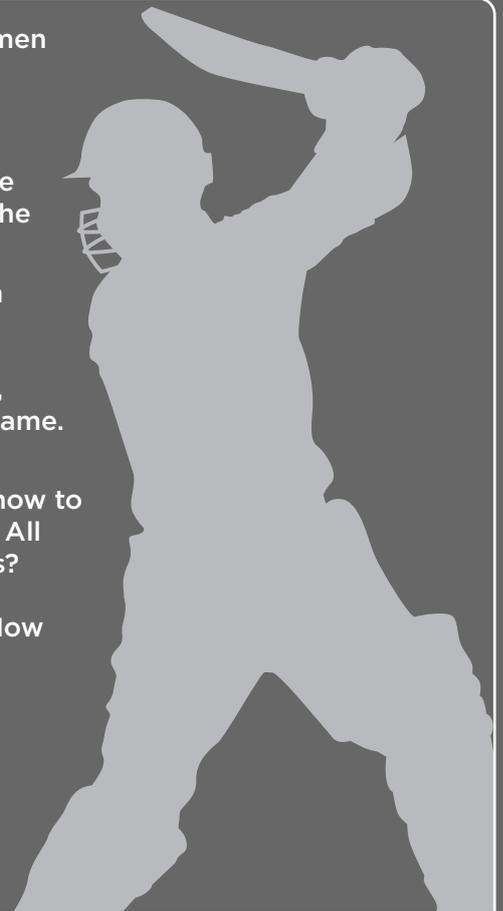
Women tell us how much they value coaching. With many women coming into the game later in life, having never played before, coaching is essential to give them the confidence to enjoy playing.

Yet many women have limited access to quality coaching in the club environment and this may be one of the reasons behind the high level of churn in the women's game.

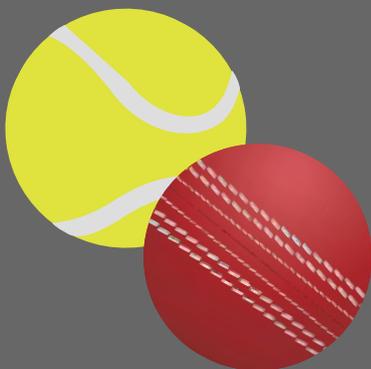
Recent research has shown that women expect very little from cricket, but they still want to play. But maybe we should be setting their expectations slightly higher; giving women the quality of experience they deserve to keep them coming back, and reduce the amount of turnover we are seeing across the game.

Currently, only 10 per cent of our clubs are offering cricket for women and girls, and we have a significant opportunity right now to change this. How are we going to inspire the girls engaged by All Stars Cricket and Chance to Shine to stay involved in our clubs? How are we going to persuade the mums who sit around the boundary to pick up a bat and give cricket a go themselves? How are we going to ensure that our existing network of hard ball clubs are given the support to grow without having to drive miles for a game?

Let's grab hold of the exciting opportunity that hosting a Women's World Cup provides by making a step change for women across the game. Let's focus on raising their expectations.



Choice - can we create more variety and greater accessibility to playing opportunities?



Quality - can we improve the quality of the welcome at our cricket clubs and create top class playing experiences?



Connections - can we raise the profile of cricket for women and girls, create new role models and improve our communications?



In 2017 we will be celebrating all that's great about the women's game and we would love to hear about the successes you are having in inspiring more girls and women to play, and in improving the experiences of those already enjoying cricket. #expect



THIS COACHING LIFE

Naomi Aspin and Patricia Hankins tell us their coaching stories; opportunities taken and challenges faced.

Naomi: Ten years after my first coaching session – when I was just trying to help out at the club where my father was the chairman – I look back and I’m amazed at how much I’ve learnt and experienced.

I can see how much I’ve grown as a person through coaching and how my cricket family has also grown, massively. I am very fortunate to have some great mentors who always help and support me. I am part of the CA, an association of thousands of like-minded members, and part of a coach education team that

works hard to inspire other coaches to learn and grow.

Those initial intentions, of giving something back to the sport which had been a fundamental part of my family’s life, quickly evolved into something more. I wanted other children to experience the same fun, safe environment that I had through cricket, by helping out with the junior sessions at my club. Little did I know where I would be a few short years later.

My thirst for knowledge and my desire to improve saw me

attending not only local CPD workshops with the Lancashire Coaches Association but also the National Conferences where I could learn yet more information and talk it through with other like-minded coaches.

To be honest, my first National Conference was very daunting, as I think I was one of five female coaches in attendance! However, at no point was I made to feel out of place. I was just seen as another coach there to improve my knowledge. I am pleased to say that the number of female coaches at the



Patricia Hankins

National Conference is growing every time, which is absolutely fantastic to see.

As a female coach I often get asked: 'So you just coach women then?' My reply is 'No, I coach cricket.' It doesn't matter to me if my players are male or female, they are players who are attending sessions to get better and improve their skills. It is up to me as a coach to plan my sessions effectively, so every player is included yet challenged, irrespective of ability or gender – to me, that is coaching.

I feel passionately about strengthening grass-roots cricket, improving the recreational game through

quality sessions that make the players want to come back each week. Gone are the days of the coach setting out session plans weeks or months in advance. We need to be skilled and adaptable as a coach to run sessions based on what the players need and want to work on.

I am also now fortunate enough to be part of the ECB Coach Educator team within Lancashire. This allows me the opportunity of enthusing the next generation of coaches and of spreading the word about never stopping learning. I can only do that by continually learning and developing myself, which I get to do through the CA and ECB.

What a journey to date! For that I'm grateful, and I'm excited to see what experiences the next 10 years of my coaching will bring.

Naomi features in Wings to Fly 14.

Patricia: When I first started coaching, at local schools, I used to love hearing the children say, 'Oh wow, it's a girl coaching us today!'

That was in 2006, and the children were so shocked because women's cricket wasn't as popular as it is now.

Ten years later I was embarking on the Coach Educator Development Programme as well as the ECB Performance Coach course. I knew it was going to be a full-on year but I wanted to develop myself as a coach, putting myself out of my comfort zone to become a tutor who helped people to become a coach.

In October 2016 my responsibilities changed and I love my new role; I am looking at developing women's and girls' cricket within Northamptonshire, as well as our coach education programme.



Naomi Aspin

It's great to see so many girls taking up the sport and striving to improve as players – and coaches. So many are wanting to give back to the sport by gaining coaching qualifications. Northamptonshire ran three Coach Support Worker courses and two Certificate in Coaching Children's Cricket courses in the first four months of 2017, getting six females qualified as Coach Support Workers and five as coaches. I thoroughly enjoyed tutoring on these courses; I felt proud to tell everyone what I have achieved in cricket over the years and what experience I have gained.

I recently delivered the Cricket for Teachers: Primary course in a school that is dropping rounders for cricket. They put nine teachers through the training and it was great to work with people who are new to cricket but are excited about the future of the game.

Since I gained my first coaching certificate the women's game has grown massively and more females are playing and working within the sport. I will continue to do my best as a coach and coach educator and look forward to developing cricket in Northamptonshire.

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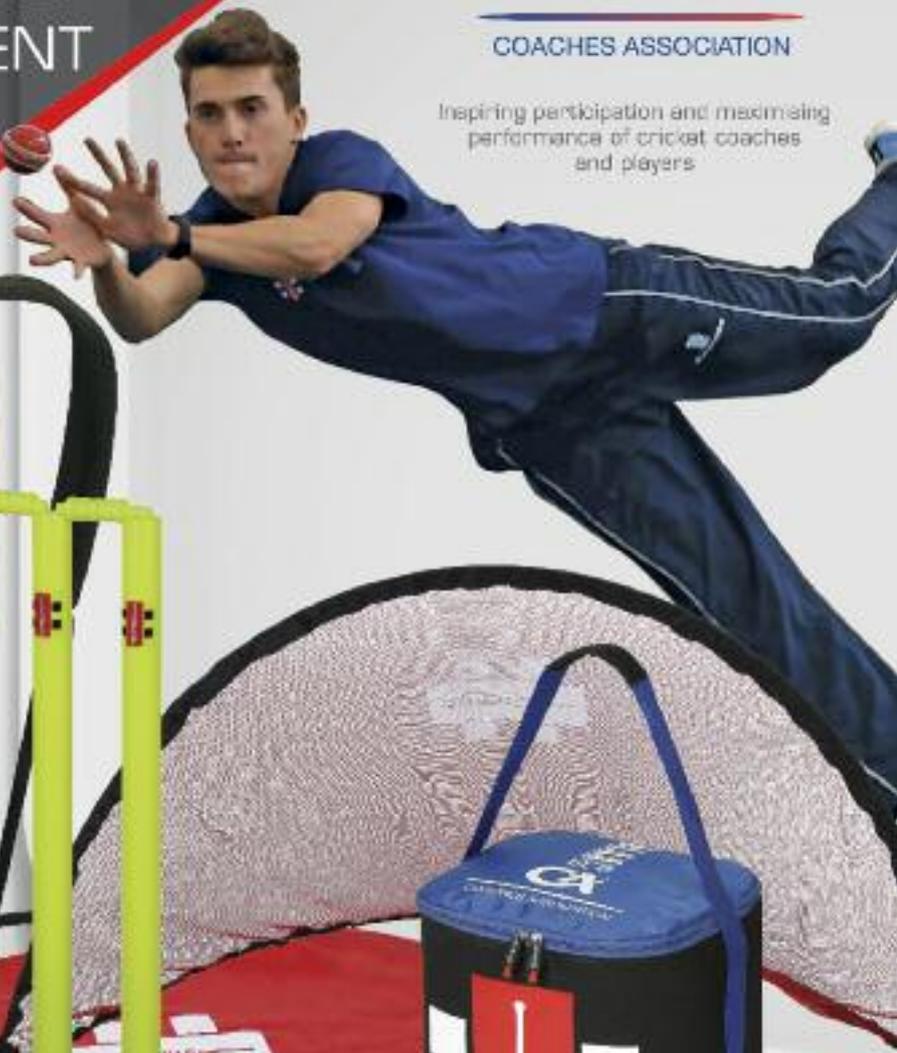


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