



ENVIRONMENTS: FOR HER

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF WALES



CONTENTS

***“I AM A GIRL. A GIRL
WHO WILL BE SEEN.”***

MARTHA APPLEBY, AGE 13

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VISION:
**INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN
 WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BE
 THEIR BEST SELF**

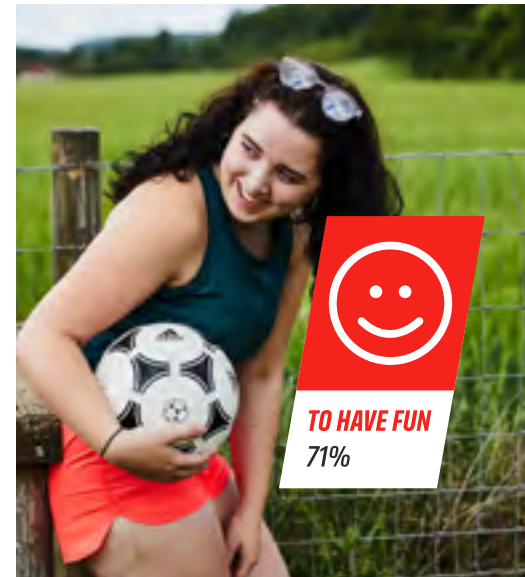
MISSION:
**CREATE THE BEST ENVIRONMENT, SUPPORT
 STRUCTURES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCELERATE
 THE GROWTH OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TO MAKE IT
 REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL**



INTRODUCTION

Women's football is the **fastest growing sport** across Europe. We've seen a **50% increase** in participation, in Wales, over the last four years. Football **builds confidence, develops essential skills and builds friendships** that last a lifetime. From our BE Football research, teenage girls highlighted **'to have fun, to be healthy and to spend time with friends'** were their three key motivators to participation.

WHY DO WE PLAY?



TO HAVE FUN
 71%



TO BE HEALTHY
 67%



SEE FRIENDS
 58%



WHAT BARRIERS DO WE FACE?

Although the growth of women's football continues to go from strength to strength, we also know that women and girls face many barriers to participation.

In order for us to create an inclusive sport for all across Wales and for us to achieve our ambitious target of **20,000 registered girls playing by 2026**, we must ensure that clubs, schools, facility providers and parents understand what these barriers look like and how we can work together to overcome them.

Access to appropriate facilities, lack of opportunities and lack of visible female role models are just some of these barriers. Further to the insight taken from the BE Football Programme, participants highlighted that the fear of judgement, being on their period and general lack of confidence were the biggest barriers. These are all things we can support our girls with.



**'I DON'T LIKE
OTHERS
WATCHING ME'**
- 36%



**'WHEN I HAVE
MY PERIOD'**
- 33%



**'I AM NOT
CONFIDENT'**
- 31%

This resource pack has been developed to support all women and girls' providers with key hints, tips and methods to ensure every female player across Wales, can play football without fear, in a positive and inclusive environment.



OUR PRINCIPLES TO CREATING POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS: FOR HER

ACCESS: Access to facilities that are fit for purpose and cater for the needs of women and girls

INCLUSION: To feel included, welcome and supported in a person-centered, positive environment

OPPORTUNITY: Have access to a variety of playing opportunities

VISIBILITY: That positive female role models are visible and accessible

VOICE: Ensure women and girls have a voice and are empowered to shape their environment





ENVIRONMENTS: FOR HER HAS BEEN DEVELOPED

FOR GIRLS, BY GIRLS!

**FROM BARRY TO BERRIEW, FROM PONTARDDULAI TO PONTYPRIDD
DIOLCH TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS.**

FACILITIES

SECTION 1

FACILITIES

Facilities are a key enabler to female participation. When looking at facilities, specifically when working within the women and girls game, there are three key areas we must consider:

1. PRACTICAL - Are the needs of female players catered for? Do they feel safe? Does the environment make them feel included and give a sense of belonging?

2. PRIORITISE - Does your facility prioritise female football? Do you have girls' only training evenings or Match Days? Do the girls and women's teams have equal access?

3. EMPOWER - Does your facility empower and inspire girls and women? Would your participants want to play there? Is there female imagery or signage? Does it motivate your participants to turn up?



1. PRACTICAL

Girls **should have** access to a facility where they can play and perform without fear or concern. The amenities on offer at your facility could be the deciding factor on a participant attending your session.

ARE YOUR FACILITIES FULLY INCLUSIVE?

 **CONSIDER**

WHAT COULD BE AMENDED OR ADAPTED TO ENSURE EVERY FEMALE FEELS COMFORTABLE TURNING UP TO TRAINING OR MATCH DAY?





KEY HINTS AND TIPS



Ensure the toilets have sanitary bins which are available to all participants and spectators. Make sure the bins are regularly changed and cleaned.



Does your changing facility have a mirror? So girls can get their battle braids on point and fix their matchday headbands.



Ensure all toilets are seated with locks that work and ALWAYS make sure there is toilet paper in the toilets. Not sure there will be any? Then pack a toilet roll in the club first aid bag.



Does your changing facility have space for girls to change in private? If not then why not normalise turning up match-ready.



CASE STUDY

PONTARDDULAIS CHANGE MAKERS

Lydia and Lily, in the U16s team, were growing frustrated with the state of the changing facilities at their club and wanted to do more to encourage new girls to join. So they got their heads together to develop an action plan as part of a school project with Plan UK and got to work.

They spent over eight hours painting and renovating the girl's toilet at the club and created some inspiring female imagery to hang up in the changing room as well as an advertising board at the ground to signpost new girls to the club.

They also organised a girls' football day for the whole club where the older players coached and encouraged the younger age groups.

By speaking up and taking action, the girls now have gender equality at the top of the club's agenda and we can't wait to see what they can achieve next.

Remember to empower your players by ensuring they have a voice to help shape their environment.



2. PRIORITISE

Following a period of year-on-year growth, with new teams being established every season, in every community across Wales, we need a different approach to facility usage, to ensure the female game is prioritised. Forward planning is important, particularly knowing there could be an U8s and U10s team in year 1, that in two years time, as players progress through the age groups, an U12s and an U14s team may need to be catered for then too.

Its important for clubs to forecast their future facility needs and plan ahead, like Caerphilly Dragons who were only established in 2019 and now have over 200 girls playing. On a weekly basis, Caerphilly need to provide 13 training slots to cater for 9 different teams.

Having girls only nights removes the fear of judgement which was highlighted as a key barrier for girls, whilst also giving young girls the exposure to older teams and players. What better way to inspire your girls than having a visible and accessible pathway? It can be intimidating if an older, all boys team, are encroaching on to

the 3G pitch before the girls team have finished their session, so its important to consider who is utilising the facility on the same days and how their behaviours can impact a young girls experience.

COULD YOUR FEMALE TEAMS TRAIN ON THE SAME NIGHT AT THE SAME VENUE?

 **CONSIDER**

WHO ELSE IS ON SITE WHEN YOUR TEAMS ARE TRAINING? IS THIS OFF PUTTING?



KEY HINTS AND TIPS



Make sure your facility or training area is clearly signposted, and there are designated drop off zones and parking. It is important that there is ample lighting, a safe route back to the car park, along with participants knowing where to find their parents. ALWAYS consider their personal safety.



Allowing your teams to train together enhances the experience for girls, and provides a vibrant and positive environment for your club. This might not be possible during the winter months with facility availability, but we'd encourage all clubs to have opportunities during the year where the whole female section can be together.



There is nothing more daunting than having teams waiting to come onto the pitch and watching your session, especially if you're new to football and lack confidence. Encourage teams using the pitch after you to be respectful, to give the girls space and not enter your area until your session has finished.



CASE STUDY

Amdani Hi @ Ocean Way 3G facility in Cardiff is the first of its kind. It's a 3G facility which is **FEMALE FIRST**. The female game is prioritised here and there is a hub committee responsible for ensuring there are female only usage nights and days.

No longer will the girls be bottom of the pecking order when it comes to accessing a state-of-the-art facility.

The hub model was developed based on the insight that fear of judgment is a key barrier for many girls, the importance of female role models for young girls and how a positive and inclusive environment can determine a girls engagement in football.

Creating a positive and inclusive environment where the women's game is recognised gives girls confidence and a sense of belonging.

The hub at Ocean Way is 'owned' by a management group made up of representatives of the female hub users - this gives women and girls a voice and the facility is developed in a way that best meets female needs.

Serving as a magnet for women and girls for the competitive and recreational game, it started slowly with only a couple of clubs booked in to use the facility when it opened its doors in 2021, but now Tuesday, Thursday, Friday nights and Sunday's are protected and

reserved for women and girls. The hub is now home to Cardiff City Women's U16s, U19s and Seniors who all train on the same evenings, Cardiff Dragons LGBTQ team, the Cardiff Women's Casual league, Cardiff Wanderers, a new Huddle centre and is a host venue for South Wales Women and Girls League mini football festivals.



3. EMPOWER

How your facility looks and feels can play a huge part in making your players feel welcome, confident and like they truly belong. Sometimes the most subtle changes can make a big difference to a girls experience, like the language and logos used on the signage at the facility.

Access to female role models and female club officials within your environment is crucial to retaining girls in our game. Sometimes girls feel more comfortable talking to a female official at the club about challenges or issues. Encourage your senior players to make time to drop-in to the junior sections' training or matches every now and again.

Visibility of positive female role models can inspire your players and help in ensuring sustained participation.

REMEMBER: IF THEY CAN SEE IT, THEY CAN BE IT.

Why not inspire your players by having imagery of positive female role models in the changing rooms. Or, make your girls team feel like the facility is their home by having pictures of the team up on the walls of the clubhouse or at the entrance of the facility.



ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

SECTION 2

ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

Creating positive environments and building inclusive cultures is key in creating a sense of belonging for women and girls in football. We'd like you to consider the following:

- 1. CROESO** - A warm welcome will support a positive first experience for new players.
- 2. CULTURE** - Create a club culture which empowers female players and makes them feel like they truly belong.
- 3. LANGUAGE** - The language we use can play a huge part in women and girls feeling welcome and included.

KNOW YOUR PLAYERS!

"To get the most out of each individual, it is so important to get to know each of your players. Understanding their motivations, abilities and interests will help you when planning sessions, selecting roles for participants and also ensuring each player is fully included and challenged at the right level"

Bethan Woolley, Girls Participation and Engagement Manager



1. CROESO

Your first experience in football or in a new team is crucial in deciding if you'll return. Whether you're a 5 year old attending your first Huddle session or a senior player joining a casual team at the age of 40, the principles to ensuring you receive a warm welcome are the same.

Consider who is welcoming a player and parent for the first time and what that first communication looks like. Whether its face to face before training or over whatsapp, ensure their first contact with your club is welcoming, positive and friendly.

You can use our Checklist below to help create your own Croeso Welcome Pack!

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Welcome message from chairperson introducing club officials, their roles and key contacts
- ✓ Club Values and ethos
- ✓ Training and match day information, like directions, facilities, parking and what to bring with you to your first session
- ✓ Get to know your team: pictures of players, team captain, Team buddy system Expectations of a typical training or matchday
- ✓ Safeguarding, complaint and disciplinary procedures
- ✓ Membership – Costs, Expectations, Codes of Conducts



2. CULTURE

VALUES

When creating a positive and inclusive club culture, its important to establish a set of values. Why not empower your players to support the club in developing and shaping your clubs' values? Try to keep it to 3-5 values and have a clear description of what each value means to your club. For example, FAMILY is one of the Cymru national team values and to them FAMILY means: Problem solving together, honesty and trust within the group, appreciate and value each others strengths, accept each other for who they are and BE YOURSELF.

BUILDING A POSITIVE TEAM OFF THE PITCH

It's important for your players to engage with each other and socialise off the pitch too. Fundraising is a great way to bring your teams together and support the club. This could be something like bag packing in a supermarket or a sponsored walk. Get creative with how you could fundraise and how it could be utilised to build team spirit and develop their social skills away from the pitch. And remember the end of season presentation is a great way to bring the entire club together and celebrate the good news stories of the season - try to keep the costs as low as possible to ensure the event is accessible to all.

REPRESENTATION

We'd also like you to consider how you incorporate the female section of the club into your wider club. Do you have a one club approach where the female game has equal representation on your committee?

PERIOD DIGNITY

Insight from our BE Football programme highlighted that being on your period was one of the biggest barriers and challenges girls face in football. We must encourage our players to speak about periods openly. Being part of a team should be a safe place to talk about your period, so let's make it that way.

- Having a period is normal. No one should feel ashamed about them.
- People should be able to speak openly about periods and not feel ashamed.
- We encourage teams to create a supportive environment for people when they have their period.
- Every first aid kit should have an age appropriate and varying selection of sanitary products - normalise asking and helping yourself.



CASE STUDY

CYMRU WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

The Cymru national team utilise player leadership groups to empower the players, give them a voice and allow them to take ownership in creating and maintaining a positive team environment and culture.

Cymru fullback Lilly Woodham told us:

"I know in teams I've been in, sometimes going to a manager can be really nerve racking. Going to one of your peers can be a lot more comfortable than going straight to the manager."

Utilising player leadership groups makes the players feel their voice and input is valued. Cymru's Charlie Estcourt believes that any team could benefit from a player leadership group, regardless of what level you play at:

"It works well for us in our national team, but it could also work with a grassroots under 12s team too. You could get three of the girls who you think would be good in those roles, and they could speak with the manager every few weeks just to give feedback from the group about things like the choice of music or what they've enjoyed the most in training."

By having leadership groups it gives the players ownership, builds confidence whilst developing their leadership skills.

Remember: it is important your players feel confident to play and perform, and you should always allow your girls to express themselves.



3. LANGUAGE

Language can be one of the biggest perpetrators of sexism and gender stereotypes in sport and is a powerful method of structuring attitudes. Language and terminology can hugely influence how people perceive themselves, others, and the world around them, so it's important we all take responsibility to develop our own awareness around this topic and understand what is acceptable or unacceptable and why.

In your own football environment, you may hear someone use language that is just a bit dated, or you don't feel comfortable with, and whilst they may not mean to cause offence, it's important to challenge the use of language that you feel devalues women and girls in football. Without challenging and talking about why certain language is dated or damaging to the women's game, we will continue to see this language used and the game won't progress.

We spoke with women and girls across Wales about their experiences in the game and the use of language was a common theme and a key component to consider when creating inclusive and positive environments. On the right hand side are some words and phrases that women and girls are hearing all too often, these made the girls feel disrespected or devalued.

DO NOTS

'WELL PLAYED BOYS... AND CARYS.'

'DO YOU PLAY BY THE SAME RULES?'

'THE TACKLE WAS A BIT PHYSICAL FOR A WOMEN'S GAME.'

'YOUR ACTUALLY QUITE GOOD FOR A GIRL.'

'THAT'S NOT VERY LADYLIKE.'



Words like Luv, Hun and Darling are not appropriate, and many of our players found that the word 'Women' was far more empowering than 'Ladies' which they felt sounded dated. Phrases such as "Oh there's a girl on the team" or "Didn't the girl play well today" made them feel as though being a girl made them weaker. If we start to pick up on these phrases, we can start to change a societal unconscious bias and help to support our Women and Girls to feel confident and like they truly belong.



Some of these sayings are things we can all use on a weekly basis when coaching, playing or supporting our team. However, by using things like 'Come on lads' or 'Well played boys', it can alienate female players on the team. Instead by using more inclusive language such as "Come on United/Town/City" we can create a more inclusive environment for girls to thrive.

Comments from the touchline from parents, supporters and other coaches can also have a massive impact on our female players. Hearing comments like “Oh there’s a girl on the team” or “didn’t the girl on the team play well”, may seem like passing comments and have no malice to them but they can further alienate girls from their team and the game. By pointing out that there is a girl on the team or singling her out can make her feel as though she didn’t belong in the team, or it’s unusual to see a girl playing football, which is the total opposite of what we want our female players to feel.

REMEMBER:

- Always challenge inappropriate behaviour and language.
- Always report offensive or discriminatory language through your Clubs reporting procedure or to ReportIT@faw.co.uk
- The use of language can sometimes make girls feel less valued than boys in football: think about what you say and how you say it.
- Sometimes making small changes can have a huge impact on girls feeling like they belong in football.

To find out more on how to challenge offensive or discriminatory language why not complete the Challenging Discrimination in Football Module or check out our resources available on the PAWB website at pawb.cymru



“THE COACH IS THE ONE WHO SETS THE EXAMPLE. IF THE COACH IS ROLE MODELLING INCLUSIVE AND POSITIVE BEHAVIORS, THEN THE PLAYERS AND PARENTS WILL FOLLOW THAT EXAMPLE.”

LILY WOODHAM



PITCH PERFECT

The majority of time you spend with the players at your club will be on the pitch. Whether it's training, or matchday - there are plenty of considerations and opportunities to ensure each of your players feels heard, fully included and has equal access.

In this section we'll look at the Welsh Way 4 pillars and explore how we can utilise this model to support coaches with outside the box thinking when adapting sessions for different audiences.

THE FOUR PILLARS:

- **TECHNICAL**
- **PHYSICAL**
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL**
- **SOCIAL**

Most of the content in this chapter is not explicit to female participation, and can be transferable across all areas of the game.



SECTION 3

TECHNICAL

1. ADAPTING SESSIONS FOR ALL ABILITIES

We know the player pool in the female game is smaller than the boys' game, with 12,000 female players compared to 80,000 male players in 2021/22 season, and varying abilities within teams is very likely. For this reason, it is key to understand how we can progress and regress our sessions, ensuring all players can be included. Considerations when progressing/regressing a practice may include things such as:

- Practice layout and planned transitions.
- Area size – this can vary greatly, but how players are positioned within this space can help to support success.
- Opposition – Are practices opposed or unopposed i.e., defender added to the practice to progress and add realism.
- Time & Competition – Can we extend or decrease time or add competition to practices to support/challenge players accordingly.

2. ENSURING FLEXIBILITY WITHIN SESSIONS

Our players all enjoy different aspects of our sessions. It is important that we mix this up, or within weekly sessions. Do you currently consider introducing competitive and non-competitive elements to training? Do you offer opportunity for feedback from players? Remember to do more of what they love!



3. LET THEM PLAY!

We need to allow our girls to experiment and try new things on the pitch. The best way to do this is through lots of touches on the ball and small-sided games. Most of our players will want to learn and progress, but some will just want to give it a go, and try something new – this is OK!

Knowing our players will also allow us to know how and when to intervene with a practice – this could be different for all of the girls in your group. Some players won't want to be put on the spot. It's OK to ask questions of our players, but knowing how they react to praise and criticism will help us make sure they never feel uncomfortable.

4. LISTEN TO YOUR PLAYERS

How much time do we take to listen to what our players want?

How can you tell if a players' experiences are positive?

Encouraging feedback from sessions, and opportunity for your players to share how they feel can support with sustaining participation and focus. Remember this process doesn't have to be formal. Encourage two-way open communication, it can be intimidating sharing your experiences to the coach in front of the group, so can you facilitate the girls speaking-up collectively? Please see the Cymru WNT Leadership group case study.

It is vital we think about how we communicate, what language we use, and getting down to eye level – this all enables us to be more approachable and welcoming.

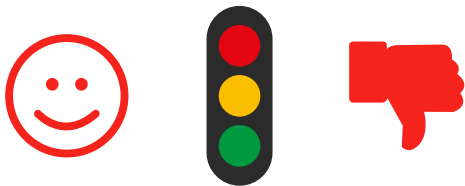


Here are some easy ways to gather feedback...

Use online tools to create polls and surveys (there are plenty of free online tools available like Google Forms).

This gives you a quick way to get some feedback on just one session or a whole season at the end of the year. You can also use this to send out to parents.

A quick and easy way to gain feedback on sessions from your younger age groups is utilising simple visuals like thumbs up, thumbs down, emoji's or traffic light systems when using prompted questions. 'Was today's session fun?' Green for Yes, Amber for OK and Red for No.



5. THEMING A SESSION

Theming a session is a great way to engage all participants. By knowing your players interests, getting creative with sessions helps capture your players' imagination and engagement within the session.

Whilst some of your players will be footy fans some of your girls may be more interested in TV programmes, Youtube or Pop Stars - how can you utilise this to make your sessions fun and engaging to maximise participation?



PHYSICAL

1. KNOW YOUR PLAYERS

Your players will all be at different stages of ability, maturity and physicality. It is important to ensure your sessions are relaxed, fun, enjoyable and safe for all to participate. It's important to reinforce that it's OK to make mistakes - establish a fun and inclusive approach to participating, where all girls support and encourage each other.

2. EQUIPMENT

Equipment is important. Making sure your equipment is age and ability appropriate can be key to a player returning. Make sure your balls are the right size, the goals aren't too big and the bibs fit. Working with beginners? Have you thought about using alternative equipment to help with engagement? E.G. Beanbags, soft balls, bigger cones..



PSYCHOLOGICAL

1. ADDITIONAL ROLES

Giving your players the opportunity to perform different roles can support with self-confidence, leadership and many more skills.

You may wish to identify a leader or helper of the week, this doesn't always have to be your captain - you may want to mix this up.

If managed correctly, Player of the Week can also really boost confidence, and help integrate players into the group - this can be awarded for many different reasons. Remember: Ensure every player is given this opportunity during the season!

Do you have a buddy system? This could be any confident player within your team who helps and introduces new players at your session. This not only helps build the confidence of the buddy, but also reduces anxiety and worry for any new players.

2. ROTATE YOUR PLAYERS

Always mix groups and partners within training - it is important to encourage players to step outside of their comfort zone in a comfortable environment and create a setting where all players feel included.



3. BE PATIENT

You may have players who have never played the game before, or players who are just very inquisitive. If a player is unsure, they will ask multiple questions. As a coach it's your role to alleviate some of these concerns or worries - and be patient!

Demonstrating and allowing players to ask questions can really help individuals who may be feeling anxious and unsure.

4. EMPOWER

It's key to understand yours and your colleagues' role as role models to your players. You can positively play a key role in your players' development. Encouraging and re-assuring your players - even if something isn't going quite right, can help with confidence, resilience and motivations to continue to play. Within this, it is also important to identify any female role model within your club to help inspire your girls. This could be older players, a volunteer, or a parent that supports each week.



SOCIAL

1. SOCIAL TIME

Most of your participants will be turning up to your sessions looking forward to having fun with their friends. This should be encouraged, We want our participants to have fun and create friendships. Could you consider allocated social time as part of your session, during drinks breaks or ask them to arrive 15 minutes early.

To support in allowing you to get through your session, whilst giving opportunity for socialising, could you consider an allocated Social Time? This could be arriving 15 minutes early? During drinks breaks? Or as part of your session? This must work to suit your delivery, however having the opportunity to socialise is just as important as the football, when creating a positive environment.

2. WORKING IN SMALLER GROUPS

Working in small groups, allows opportunity to work on team work, communicate and get to know each other through games. Not only this, but by working in smaller groups you will get the most out of your shy players who may be too anxious in a bigger group session.



BEST PRACTICE

ABERGAVERNNY

In 2021/22, Abergavenny introduced their U19s team which has supported them to create a seamless pathway for players to progress from junior to senior football. It can sometimes be daunting for a young 16-year-old girl to move into a senior environment, but Abergavenny have supported their players' transition through the following:

- The U16s, 19s and Seniors train on the same nights at the same facility and this helps create a one club culture.
- All of the senior players know the U16s and U19s players and are always supportive and encouraging of them - this sounds like such a small thing, but is so important in making the young players feel welcome.
- Players are moved up from U16s into U19s or U19s into Seniors when the time is right for that player and is managed by the coaches from the different teams working together to ensure the transition is managed effectively.
- A senior player will become a mentor to a player moving up and that's reassuring for the player to know that there is a senior player there for her to show her the ropes and answer any questions she may not feel confident asking in front of the group.



MIXED TEAMS

Mixed football is allowed up until age 16 in Wales and there is flexibility in the FAW rules which allow girls to play up to two years down when playing with or against boys. The FAW encourage mixed football and whilst you might not currently have any female players in your junior teams, you need to consider, is your environment inclusive if a female player joined your club? Here are key three areas to consider with mixed football:

- 1. OPPORTUNITY** - Do girls have access to a variety of opportunities, based on their abilities and motivations?
- 2. INCLUSION & ACCESS** - Include, don't alienate female players in your team.
- 3. CLUB & PARENT EDUCATION** - Consider how the behaviours of players, parents and club officials impact a female players' experience.

SECTION 4



1. OPPORTUNITY

Girls should have access to a variety of playing opportunities. Some girls may prefer to be in an all girls' environment, and others are very happy in their local mixed teams. Some girls might want to play recreationally, to be with their friends, and others aspire to be the next Carrie Jones. Let's encourage a variety of opportunities and support our girls wherever they feel most confident.

Our new FAW Girls Academy Programme sees the most talented girls in Wales from the age of 11-16 play in the Cymru Licensed Academy games programme, competing against boys. Mixed football is encouraged as a great player development tool, and over 70% of our women's national team and youth team players have played with or against boys during their youth. To find out about our player development programmes, head over to fawtrust.cymru



2. INCLUSION & ACCESS

If you have girls in your team, ensure you include them and don't alienate them or treat them differently. When speaking to girls playing in mixed teams, they told us that whilst its important that the needs of female players are considered, like access to appropriate changing facilities, when it comes to how you engage with them, they just want to feel included and treated the same. Remember to consider gender neutral language, the worst thing you can do is say things like 'well done lads and Bethan ...' singling them out will just make them feel like they don't belong.

Consider what changing facilities are available before and after the match. Is there access to a female changing room or a spare match officials room that girls could utilise? Make sure you check in advance and if there isn't anywhere appropriate, you could give the kit out at training for players to arrive changed and ready to play. If the coach gives a pre-match talk in the changing room, ensure this is done once everyone has changed and that everyone is included.





"GROWING UP IN A RURAL PART OF WALES, THERE WEREN'T MANY GIRLS PLAYING IN MY AREA. I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE GAME PLAYING WITH THE BOYS WITH NEWTOWN WHITE STARS FROM AGE 5 TO AGE 11, AND IT WAS MY FIRST COACH PAUL INNS WHO MADE MY EARLY EXPERIENCES IN THE GAME POSITIVE. PAUL DID THIS BY ENSURING I HAD ACCESS TO THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES THE BOYS HAD, HE ALWAYS MADE ME FEEL INCLUDED AND TREATED ME THE SAME."

CARRIE JONES

3. CLUB & PARENT EDUCATION

Remember it's not just down to the coach to create a positive environment. Club committee members, teammates, and parents all play a key role in supporting EVERY player at the club. Whilst you may not be able to control the comments of the opposition, you can influence how your team responds. Girls highlighted that whilst the most negative part of being the only girl in the team is the sexist or patronising comments they sometimes hear from opposing coaches and parents, it was also really powerful when the boys in their team would stick up for them and shut down or call out negative comments. So remember, you're never too young to be a strong male ally to female players.



"LOOKING BACK TO PLAYING WITH THE BOYS IN A GRASSROOTS TEAM, PARENTS WOULD QUITE OFTEN SAY 'OH LOOK THERE'S A GIRL ON THEIR TEAM', AS IF HAVING A GIRL ON THE TEAM WAS GOING TO MAKE THE TEAM WEAKER. THOSE COMMENTS STILL STICK WITH ME TODAY, SO PEOPLE SHOULD CONSIDER HOW A YOUNG GIRL MIGHT FEEL AFTER HEARING COMMENTS LIKE THAT."

FFION MORGAN



CASE STUDY

BARRY TOWN UNITED ACADEMY

Vera plays for Barry Town academy U14s, she's the only girl in the team and loves every second. Barry Town have supported Vera through the following steps:

- They've brought in a female assistant coach to ensure there is a visible female role model within the club
- All the staff knew Vera's name before she arrived for her session which made her feel at ease straight away.
- The coaches use inclusive language like team, them/their and players not boys and lads
- The coaches are consistent with their communication with all players and ensure that they don't single-out Vera.

@RhysSkinner_PJ



**"YOU'LL GET THE BEST OUT OF A
PLAYER IF THEY FEEL SAFE AND
CONFIDENT TO BE THEIR TRUE
SELF IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT."**

GEMMA GRAINGER

DIOLCH



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