

Women denied chance to shine in top sport positions

The most alarming statistic outlined in a new report published today shows that **women are ignored in ¾ of decision-making positions in sport.**

This worrying statistic is just one of many facts and figures to be found in the UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport [1], prepared by Women's Sports Foundation [2], on behalf of UK Sport [3], monitors the progress and development of women's sport in participation, excellence and leadership and found that **women make up just 26% of all membership on sports boards and committees.**

Even where the committee is charged with solely running women's sport there is a stark imbalance. The FA's women's committee, which oversees the development of the women's side of the game, has just two women members on a total board of ten.

National Governing Bodies (NGB's) with resources and capacity to meet the targets set within The Strategy Framework are consistently missing them.

- Of the **18 major NGB's women made up just 15% of their boards membership.**

The latest findings embarrass those governing bodies with the resources and capacity to support schemes aimed at encouraging more women into strategic positions.

"Like any successful business sport needs to use the widest possible talent pool. It is clear that is not happening across sport and in order to push British sport to it's fullest possible potential all institutions need to engage, fully utilise and use the skills that women have to offer", said Helen Donohoe, Head of Policy, Women's Sports Foundation.

Despite high profile names such as Sue Campbell (Chair of UK Sport and CEO Youth Sport Trust) climbing their way to the top, few have followed suit.

NGB's are not alone,

- There are currently no female sports editors in national and regional print media.
- In coaching, only 8% of all British coaches that went to 2004 Athens Olympic Games were women.

~more follows~

While there is much debate about the reasons why women seem to be blocked from senior positions in sport, WSF's research has indicated that factors include, lack of training, qualifications, opportunities, self-confidence or taking time out to have children. One thing is certain, when interviewed women expressed a keen desire to move up the career ladder but were unsure how to do it and felt unsupported. However, it is a situation that can be resolved, it is not an insurmountable problem.

WSF is working across sport to maximise opportunities for women's professional development.

Sonja Arthur, from London, a participant on the WSF's Women into Coaching Project [4], which aims to get 75 women qualified at level 1 and 2, outlined her experience,

“Being involved in athletics for a while I have noticed that women have found it a lot harder to get on the coaching ladder than their male counterparts. Coaching programmes are just not marketed at women and it is very clear to me that women are far less likely to be encouraged into coaching programmes than men, especially elite coaching. Being involved in the Women into Coaching - London Project is a breathe of fresh air for me. The project has given me the skills and confidence to pursue a career in coaching and achieve my dream job of being part of the athletics coaching team at Team GB.

~ends~

Notes to editors:

- [1] The UK Strategy Framework on Women and Sport is commissioned by UK Sport and compiled by Women's Sports Foundation. The Strategy was first published in 2003 and details the progress of women's sport at participation, funding, performance and leadership level.
- [2] The Women's Sports Foundation, founded in 1984, is the UK's leading organisation dedicated to improving and promoting opportunities for women and girls in sport and physical activity. The charity works across the UK through a combination of advocacy, information, education, research and training. For more info on WSF please go to www.wsf.org.uk.
- [3] Established by Royal Charter in 1996, UK Sport works in partnership with the home country sports councils and other agencies to lead sport in the UK to world-class success. UK Sport is responsible for managing and distributing public investment (£29 million annually) and is a statutory distributor of funds raised by the National Lottery (9.2% of sport allocation). It is accountable to Parliament through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
- [4] Women into Coaching – London is run by the Women's Sports Foundation and aims to get 75 women qualified at level 1 or 2 in either football, rugby, swimming or gymnastics by Dec 2006. European Social Funding funds the project.

A full copy of the UK Strategy Report please contact Alex Russell 02072711740 or a.russell@wsf.org.uk

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