ACHIEVING GENDER BALANCE IN SWIM COACHING

Greater female involvement in coaching is universally beneficial for all involved in swimming. In swimming, male and female athletes train together. Whereas in coaching, there is an uneven representation, with males dominating the workforce, especially at the higher levels. The benefits to young girls having women in coaching positions include role modelling, challenging the stereotypes about women and leadership, and demonstrating coaching as an option for women.

GOOD EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Discuss it at Committee or Management Level
Start an open conversation and create a case for change for having a female coach
Best practice:
* Place it high on the agenda to signify the importance
* Create a network of male supporters to champion the cause
The key thing to avoid:
* Treating obstacles as reasons as to why it can’t be done

Review the Position Description
Identify any restrictive skills or competencies that might create obstacles for women.
Best practice:
* Develop a policy of diversity and inclusion and ensure it is applied to the role
* Create a mixture of skills and competencies based on the role
The key thing to avoid:
* Listing characteristics for the role rather than the specific competencies

Seek and invite female candidates
Cast a net wide to identify and attract quality female candidates.
Best practice:
* Be transparent and publicise widely the requirements and the process
* Setting up a committee to create a list of candidates; ask them to create a gender-balanced shortlist and include at least one woman on this committee
The key thing to avoid:
* Don’t rely on past roles or experiences to create expectations of requirements for the position

Welcome the new coach
Create a positive experience so the benefits of new talent can be harnessed from the outset.
Best practice:
* Assign a committee member to work with the new coach while they build knowledge of your organisation and its people
* Monitor progress, offer personal development opportunities to advance their skills
The key thing to avoid:
* Assuming the job is done once a woman has taken on the role