

Coaching through a Gender Lens:

Maximizing Girls' Play and Potential

Acknowledgments

Authorship

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The Expert Panel played a vital role in the formulation of the final report, especially interpretation and presentation of findings in a non-biased manner. The panel members contributed expertise in the relevant academic areas of gender studies, sociology and psychology of sport, and girls' sports programming.

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About Nike Social & Community Impact

Nike believes in the power of sport to unleash human potential and build community.

Nike fuels this belief through Made to Play, its commitment to getting kids moving through play and sport so that they can lead

healthier, happier, and more successful lives. Together with community partners and employees around the world, Nike is designing innovative solutions to get more than 16 million kids playing, running, and jumping their way to a brighter future. Find out more about Nike's commitment to getting kids moving and providing opportunities for equal playing fields for all at Nike.com/Madetoplay.

Made to Play



About the Women's Sports Foundation

The Women's Sports Foundation exists to enable girls and women to reach their potential in sports and life. We are an ally, an advocate, and a catalyst. Founded by Billie Jean King in 1974, we strengthen and expand participation and leadership opportunities through research, advocacy, community programming, and a wide variety of collaborative partnerships. The Women's Sports Foundation has positively shaped the lives of millions of youth, high school and collegiate student-athletes, elite athletes, and coaches. We're building a future where every girl and woman can #KeepPlaying and unlock the lifelong benefits of sport participation. All girls. All women. All sports. To learn more about the Women's Sports Foundation, please visit www.WomensSportsFoundation.org

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Letter from the CEO

Founded 45 years ago by Billie Jean King, the Women's Sports Foundation's enduring commitment is to ensure that all girls and all women have access to physical activity and sports together with the benefits they provide. We know that, through sports, girls grow and thrive in limitless ways, developing life-long confidence, perseverance, and leadership, among many other assets key to their personal development. Of equal importance, girls who are involved with sports experience the joy that comes from playing, teamwork, empowerment, and strength.

At the Women's Sports Foundation, research informs all of our work. And though progress has been made, disparities of gender, race, and economics persist in sport —creating barriers to opportunity. What's more, girls also face intersecting challenges around culture, gender norms, environment, policy, and practice that further impede participation. The Foundation works tirelessly to address these challenges, and our programs are making a difference. We are so grateful to our many partners on the national and local levels for helping to tackle these inequities head on, propelling girls and women to new heights.

Given the gender gap and disproportionate drop-out rate of girls in sport participation, the Women's Sports Foundation, with generous funding from Nike, commissioned a study, *Coaching through a Gender Lens: Maximizing Girls' Play and Potential*. With a strong appreciation for the critical role that coaches play in girls' lives, we sought to examine the intersection of girls' development with coaching practice to better understand the factors that influence participation, engagement, and persistence in sport. While evidence-based research in this area has been extremely limited, our research identified specific coaching and program-level practices that can counter some of the barriers, close the gap, and promote stronger engagement and retention among girls.

The research was multi-dimensional and yielded tremendous insights regarding the ways in which coaches can positively influence girls' current sports experience as well as their future likelihood of playing sports. From a national survey of girls and their parents to in-depth interviews with experts in coaching and youth development and to a survey of exemplary community-based sport programs, what we discovered was illuminating and inspiring. This is the first national study to listen to the voices of girls and their parents about how coaches influence girls' sport experiences. Among the many rich findings, the research confirmed that a positive coaching experience is highly predictive of girls loving and continuing with their sport. The research offers detailed findings about what constitutes a positive coaching experience for girls and offers an understanding of how coaching that integrates a gender lens can maximize girls' interest and motivation.

We encourage coaches, administrators, program leaders, parents, educators, and others to use this research as a springboard from which to employ practices that optimize girls' participation in sport. We are deeply grateful to the thousands of dedicated coaches who make a difference in the lives of young people every day. We look forward to continuing to use this research to create tools that will help coaches continue to teach, mentor, and guide girls forward in their sports experience and in their lives.



Dr. Deborah Antoine
CEO, Women's Sports Foundation

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Executive Summary

The Women's Sports Foundation commissioned the *Coaching through a Gender Lens: Maximizing Girls' Play and Potential* report to examine the intersection of early adolescent girls' sports developmental needs with their "current day" experiences in sport, with the purpose of identifying coaching practices and strategies that will best support girls' initiation and continued participation in sport. Coaches play an important role in getting and keeping girls involved in sports. Given the gender gap and disproportionate drop-out rates in girls' sports participation, which is heightened as girls transition from childhood to early adolescence, there is a need for coaching strategies and practices that address the unique challenges girls encounter in participating in sport. Yet, there is a lack of evidence-based research on developmentally appropriate coaching strategies to nurture girls' love for sport and to counter the barriers to their participation. Employing a gender lens, the current report set out to learn from young girl athletes and their parents what they think and feel about coaches and to hear from experts and exemplary sports programs about coaching and program-level practices that maximize girls' personal and sport potential. While this report focuses on coaching as it relates girls' sport participation, many of these findings would also serve to enhance the youth sport experience across gender.

To accomplish this objective, the report aimed to:

1. Examine girls' own personal experiences in sport and the degree to which specific parent, coaching, and program practices/experiences impact girls' participation, motivation, and retention.
2. Highlight the major barriers that contribute to the gender gap in sport, to inform what coaches and programs need to address in order for girls to become involved and stay involved in sports. These barriers include cultural, environmental, and policy-based barriers centered on gender norming, gender stereotypes that influence girls' socialization into sports, as well as girls' own internalization of gender norms as reflected in their self-perceptions, values/interests, and motivations in sport.
3. Determine the ways in which youth sports organizations serving girls can successfully meet the needs of participating girls to foster their continued engagement in sport, with a focus on identifying existing strengths and areas still in need of improvement.



Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation

The research involved the use of a multidimensional/multi-informant approach that entailed three major research components. First, interviews were conducted with experts in girls' sport and positive development to identify what might be key contributors to the gender gap in sport participation, and the specific types of coaching practices that can either contribute to or counter the gap. Second, informed by what we learned from the expert interviews, the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) commissioned a national survey of 1,129 girls between the ages of 7-13 who currently participate in sports and their parents (N=1,129). The survey results provide insight on how parents and young girl athletes experience and evaluate coaching practices and the coach-athlete relationship. Lastly, to determine the degree to which current sport organizations that serve girls are able to meet the needs and optimize on the strengths of participating girls, a brief assessment was administered to a sample of 64 programs within the WSF's extensive network of community partners. These programs have been identified by the WSF as exemplary for their service in providing quality sports opportunities to underserved girls. This assessment offers important insights on how to build and improve upon coaching practices in girls' sports programs.

Key Findings

- 1. Girls love sport.** Overall, the vast majority of girls (93%) loved or liked their sport a lot, and this was key to their desire to continue their sport participation. Liking/Loving the sport was identified as the most prominent factor for predicting girls' intentions to continue playing their sport in the future. Indeed, nearly two-thirds of girls (64%) reported planning to play in high school and beyond. The top predictors found to influence girls' liking/loving their sport are centered around social and mastery aspects of participation and include being with their friends, really liking the coach, not being afraid to try new skills, not being one of the least-skilled players on the team, having goals related to their participation in sports, and perceiving sports as very important in their lives.
- 2. The power of a coach.** Coaches play a central role in getting and keeping girls involved in sports. Girls' liking of the coach was directly associated with future intent to keep playing sport, importance of playing, and love for the sport. Experts, as well as girls and parents, identified several features of coaching practices and strategies critical for supporting girls' participation that align with two major dimensions of coaching: 1) the importance of a mastery-based coaching approach, and 2) the need to build supportive relationships within the context of sport.
- 3. Girls want to have fun and be challenged.** The majority of girls (85% or more) reported that their coaches created a positive environment that encourages safety, fun, skill building, and healthy competition. The girls cited supportive coaching practices that reward effort or trying a new skill over winning, encourage learning from mistakes while staying positive, and promote integrity and honesty. However, when asked directly about whether the coach places more emphasis on fun/skill development or winning, only about half of parents and girls (49%) said their coach was more focused on team members having fun, and 83% of parents agreed that coaches should put more priority on having fun.
- 4. Build supportive relationships.** Building supportive relationships within sport is a critical ingredient for engaging and retaining girls in sport. Key relationships include those between the coach and player; those among the players through friendship and team cohesion; and those between other influential individuals that are involved in the athletes' daily lives, including parents, friends, and others in their schools and communities.
- 5. Girls are strong and athletic.** Do not underestimate girls' ability. Girls are powerful, strong and very capable, and they need to be treated this way. Coaches who don't meet girls' needs and interests for competitiveness, or who "are too soft on girls, don't push them enough or treat them as fragile," send detrimental messages to girls that they are different and/or not as capable as boys or that they are not taking girls' sport as seriously. This can result in girls' lower perceived competence, sense of belonging, and investment in their participation.
- 6. Competition is a winning factor.** An emphasis on winning was also perceived to be a highly positive coaching behavior when combined with an emphasis on fun and skill development, a combination that was predictive of girls' intentions for long-term sports participation. Healthy forms of competition are ideal for fostering girls' engagement. Competitiveness, including liking to win, competing against other teams/individuals, and even friendly competition among teammates, was one of the primary reasons girls provided for why sports are "fun."
- 7. Goals motivate girls.** Goal setting is a particularly important part of coaching so that having a coach who sets goals is not only predictive of girls liking the coach, but also of girls loving the sport and intending to play in the future. Seventy percent of girls have goals related to playing their sport, with the majority of these goals focused on their own improvement in the sport, whether that is becoming better generally, working on a specific skill, or making the high school team. Although less common, some girls also discussed even higher achievement goals of acquiring college sport scholarships or becoming professional athletes.



Elana Meyers Taylor, WSF President

8. **Female coaches are important role models.** Girls more readily identify with and see a female coach as a mentor and as a role model, which, in turn, can help counter stereotypes and boost girls' confidence, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging. Female coaches were overrepresented (85% and above) on sports viewed as more feminine (e.g., gymnastics, dance, cheer) and on all-girl teams (66%), but highly underrepresented (35% or lower) on sports viewed as more masculine (e.g., baseball/softball, basketball, soccer, martial arts) in which girls are likely to face greater gender barriers for continued participation. Programs indicated female coaches were key to girls' participation and retention, yet noted challenges in recruiting female coaches. Despite female coaches receiving more positive ratings (82%) than males, nearly three quarters (73%) of girls said they think very highly of their male coaches. It is equally important for female coaches as for male coaches to use a gender-informed approach in their coaching practice to help promote engagement and offset the barriers girls experience in the sport context.

9. **Parental involvement is key.** The more parents participate, the more likely it is that their daughter loves their sport, intends to play throughout high school and beyond, and thinks playing sport is very/extremely important. While over 90% of programs responded they build relationships with parents and get them actively involved, and 75% of programs indicated parental education was a part of their programs (e.g., meeting with parents, providing materials), the most frequent challenge programs reported when coaching girls was engaging and communicating with parents.

10. **Girls still face gender-related challenges.** In contradiction to the numerous cultural messages that tell girls that sports are "for boys," our national sample of girl athletes and their parents both highly endorsed (97%) that sports are as important for girls as they are for boys, and 75% of girls and 70% of their parents reported that it is extremely or very important that they play sports. However, these girls did report experiencing some of the additional gendered challenges of being a female athlete. For example, nearly one-third (32%) of the girls reported that sometimes boys made fun of them or made them feel uncomfortable while they practiced. Nearly one-third of girls (31%) expressed that appearance-related reasons were part of their motivation for their participation. Over one-third of girls (36%) said they intend to drop out of sport prior to high school.

Findings from this report will inform coaching education and practices across sport to help create a sport climate and coaching dynamic that encourages girls of a critical age (ages 7–13), to fully participate, develop, and persist in sport so that they can reach their personal and sport



Billie Jean King, WSF Founder

potential. Consequently, improvements in sport climate and coaching practices will contribute to reducing the disproportionate drop-out rate among girls in sports beginning at early puberty, and close the gender gap in sport participation.

The report indicates a number of positive ways parents, coaches, and programs are meeting the needs of girl athletes, and programs tell us more can be done to help address the challenges of recruiting and retaining girls in sport. While most exemplary programs surveyed have specific policies or coaching practices targeted toward enhancing girls' sport participation, they indicated a need for more resources and coaching tools to build on their existing policies and practices. These include the development of education materials to address strategies for recruitment and retention of girls as well as coaching strategies for girls; the implementation of formal training programs for coaches, particularly volunteer coaches who may lack sport-specific coach training; the development of technology/ apps for coaches; the establishment of accessible and widely available coaching clinics; and increased resources to encourage women to coach. Given the vital role coaches play in the lives of girl athletes, ensuring coaches' success will have a meaningful impact on maximizing girls' play and potential.

I. Introduction

Youth sports participation is linked to substantial physical, social-emotional, and achievement-related benefits. For girls in particular, research consistently demonstrates sports participation is linked to their improved physical and mental health; academic achievement; and increased levels of body esteem, confidence, and mastery,^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} with some indication that girls reap greater benefits from sports participation than do boys.^{8,9,10} Despite these important benefits of participation, girls' participation rates lag behind those of boys at all ages,^{11,12} and girls' experience a greater decline in physical activity than boys as they grow up.^{13,14} Moreover, the attrition rate in sport is two to three times greater for girls than for boys.¹⁵ African-American and Hispanic girls enter sport at a later average age and drop out earlier than their counterparts, leaving girls of color with an even narrower window of opportunity.¹⁶ The mid- to late-childhood years through the early teens (ages 7-13) are known as a particularly critical period (formative years) for predicting future participation and engagement with the largest numbers of girls both initiating into, and subsequently dropping out of, sports during this period. The first major declines in sports participation are observed around ages 12 to 13,^{17,18} as girls enter pubertal years and experience a subsequent shift in messages they receive from the culture about femininity, desirability, expectations for interests and behavior, and peer group norms.^{19,20,21} While female athletes are often celebrated in our culture, sports continue to be associated with men and masculinity;²² as such, girls receive conflicting cultural messages about what it means to be a girl and what it means to be an athlete.^{23,24} For example, girls drop out of sports because they feel they are crossing gender boundaries, particularly when playing sports that are considered "masculine."²⁵ Girls are often considered "outsiders" in sports and physical activity contexts,²⁶ and boys dominate both informal and organized physical sports spaces.^{27,28} Both boys and girls perceive boys as having superior sports skills and associate being an athlete with being a boy.²⁹ Communities, schools, and parents devote more resources and invest more in supporting boys' participation.^{30,31,32} "Pay to play" in public schools disproportionately affects girls' ability to play sports and reap its benefits, as parents place greater value on sports participation for their sons than their daughters, both financially and ideologically.³³ Thus, girls receive subtle messages from parents, schools, and communities that their participation matters less than their male peers'.³⁴ The media coverage of sports centers on male athletes,³⁵ sending the message to young girls (and all viewers) that sports are for and about boys and men. This has the potential to limit girls' and women's



Bridge the Gap

participation³⁶ as girls internalize the negative societal messages about girls and sports.³⁷ These factors add an additional set of challenges on top of the typical reasons youth drop out of sport (e.g., lack of time, competing interests, lack of fun/enjoyment).³⁸

Given the gender gap, the disproportionate drop-out rates in girls' sports participation and the numerous gender barriers girls face in pursuing sport during this transition from childhood through early adolescence, coaches play a particularly important role in getting girls involved and keeping girls involved in sports.^{39,40,41,42,43,44,45} Yet, there is a lack of evidence-based research on developmentally appropriate, gender-informed coaching strategies to nurture girls' love for sport and to counter these major barriers to their participation. The current report set out to identify specific coaching and program-level practices that can address these major barriers that contribute to the gender gap. To accomplish this objective, the report aims to:

1. Examine girls' own personal experiences in sport and the degree to which specific parent, coaching, and program practices/experiences impact girls' participation, motivation, and retention.
2. Highlight the major barriers that contribute to the gender gap in sport, which coaches and programs need to address in order for girls to become and stay involved in sports. These barriers include cultural,

environmental, and policy-based barriers centered on gender norming, gender stereotypes that influence girls' socialization into sports, as well as girls' own internalization of gender norms as reflected in their self-perceptions, values/interests, and motivations in sport.

3. Determine the ways in which youth sports organizations serving girls can successfully meet the needs of participating girls to foster their continued engagement in sport, with a focus on identifying existing strengths and areas still in need of improvement.

It is important to note that girls may benefit from gender-informed coaching practices not because boys and girls are inherently different, rather because gender figures so centrally in sports contexts. Girls may benefit from coaching practices and strategies that directly address and target the gendered challenges girls face when participating in sports. Coaching practices that do not assume boys and girls can be coached in the same way are needed because boys and girls do not experience sport in the same way as a result of differences in gender socialization and cultural beliefs, as outlined above (see also: Etnier, 2011; Messner, 2011).^{46,47} Findings from this report will inform coaching education and practices

across sport to help create a sport climate and coaching dynamic that encourages girls of a critical age (ages 7–13), to fully participate, develop, and persist in sport so that they can reach their personal and sport potential. Consequently, improvements in sports climate and coaching competence will contribute to reducing the disproportionate drop-out rate among girls in sports beginning at early puberty and close the gender gap in sport participation.



Girls in the Game

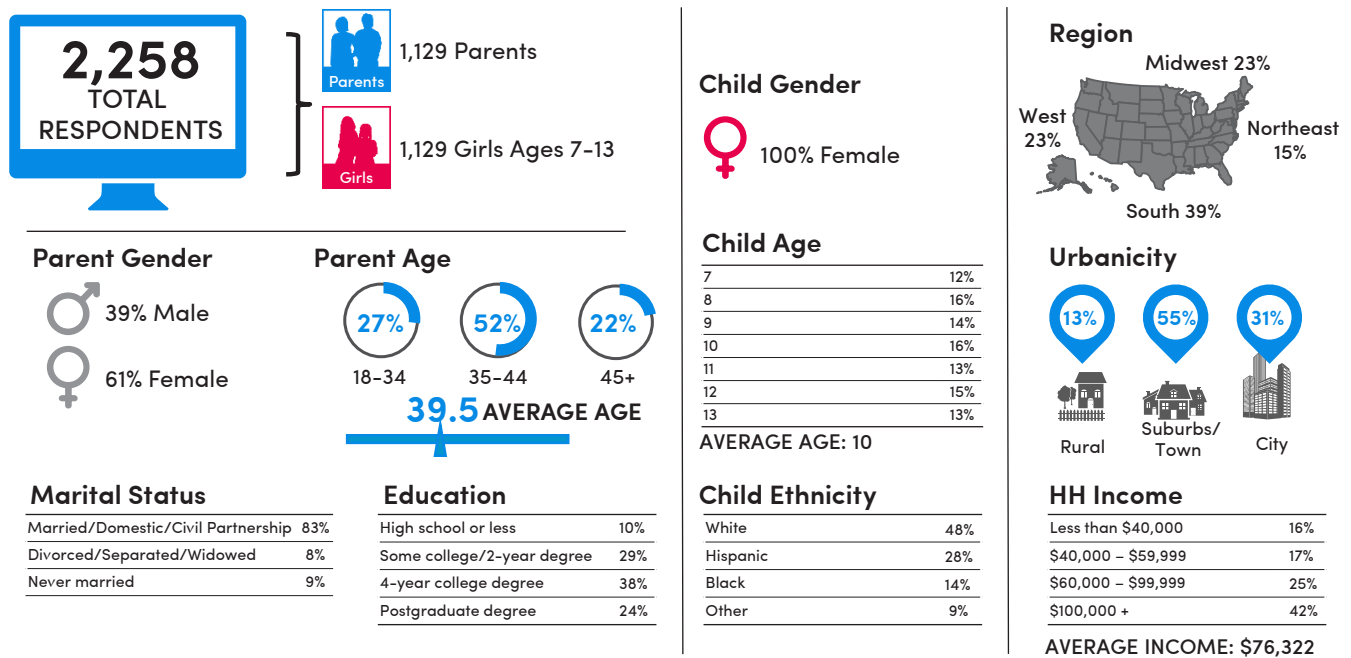
II. Methodology

The present study used a multidimensional/multi-informant approach that entailed three major research components. First, interviews were conducted with experts in girls' sport and positive development to identify possible prominent contributors to the gender gap and the specific types of coaching practices that can either contribute to or counter these barriers (see Appendix I). Second, informed by the expert interviews on effective strategies for engaging girls in sports, the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) commissioned a national survey about participation and experiences of girls in youth sports related to coaching. The survey was administered to girls between the ages of 7–13 who currently participate in sports and to their parent to inquire about girls' and their parents' perceptions and personal experiences in youth sport related to coaching (see Appendix II). A nationally representative sample of girls (N=1,129) and their parents (N=1,129) participated in the survey (see Figure 1).



Woodcraft Rangers

Figure 1. Sample Characteristics



Lastly, to determine the degree to which current sport organizations that serve girls are able to address identified barriers and meet the needs (and optimize on the strengths) of participating girls, a brief assessment was administered to 134 programs within the WSF’s extensive network of community partners. These programs have been identified by the WSF as exemplary for their service in providing quality sports opportunities to underserved girls (see Appendix III). All 134 organizations were sent a survey, and 64 (48%) responded (see Appendix III). Eighty-four percent of programs responding were from

urban settings, 8% were suburban, 3% were rural, and 5% indicated “other” (mix of urban and suburban). Sports frequently offered by programs* were basketball (21**), soccer (18), volleyball, (12) tennis (11), track/cross country (9), dance (8), lacrosse (8), and baseball/ softball (8). Nearly 93% of programs serve 50 girls or more (with 45% of programs serving more than 200 girls). The majority of programs serve girls older than 7 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Exemplary Program Descriptions

Program Location	Urban Setting	Suburban Setting	Rural Setting	Multiple Settings
	54 (84%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)	3 (5%)
Most Common Sports Offered*	Basketball	Soccer	Volleyball	Tennis
	21	18	12	11
Number of Girls Served	Less than 50	51-100	101-200	More than 200
	5 (8%)	17 (21%)	13 (20%)	29 (45%)
Age of Girl Participants*	Less than 7 years	7-10 years	11-13 years	Older than 13 years
	17	42	57	45

* Numbers do not add up to 100% because programs could report multiple sports and age groups

** Indicates number of programs in the survey sample that offer the sport

III. Girls' Participation

The national survey of girls' participation in sports indicated that sports participation is dominated by soccer, dance, basketball, and gymnastics, with the popularity of softball/baseball, swimming/diving, cheerleading, and volleyball close behind (see Figure 2). However, likely due — at least partially — to variations in access to sports, the popularity of sports differed by age with younger girls (ages 7–10) more likely to participate in soccer, dance, gymnastics, and martial arts, and older girls (11–13) more likely to participate in volleyball and track/cross country (see Table 2 on following page). Girls from higher-income households, as well as girls in urban areas, were more likely to participate in a wider range of sports (two or more within the last year). Girls and their parents were randomly assigned to answer about one sport in which the girl had participated over the past year. Over one-third of girls reported playing the identified sport for three years or more (see Figure 3 on page 12). While participation duration of three years or more was most common among older girls (43%), there was a substantial percentage of younger girls (7–10) who had also played for three or more years (31%). Girls who had participated for three or more years were more likely to be white and come from higher income households, and less likely to come from urban areas. In turn, duration of participation was positively related to loving the sport and planning to play sport in high school and beyond.

Team type also varied by age, with 65% of 7- to 10-year-olds playing on local recreational or house teams compared to only 38% of 11- to 13-year-olds playing on this type of team (see Figure 4 on page 12). Rather, older girls were more likely to have access to, and opt to play on, school-based teams (40%) compared to younger girls (18%). About 20% of the girls reported participating on local or higher-level travel teams across ages. Variations in team type by youth race/ethnicity and household income were also likely reflective, at least partially, of differences in access to sport with Hispanic girls and girls from low-income households (less than 40K) most likely to play on school-based teams, and girls from high income households (100K+) most likely to play on travel teams. Two-thirds of girls played on girls-only teams.

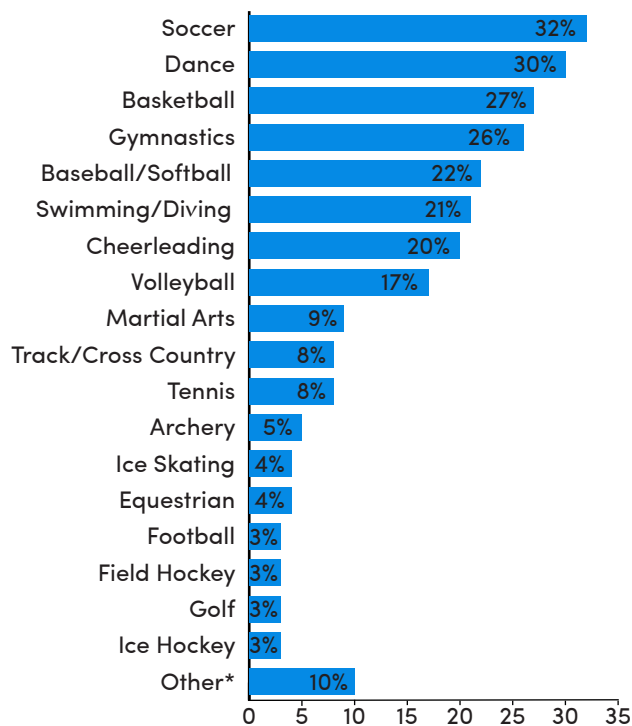
Of those who played on co-ed teams, the teams were generally more girls or an equal mix (with only 13% reporting that their team was made up of mostly boys). Younger girls were more likely to play on co-ed teams than older girls (see Figure 5 on page 13).

Overall, the vast majority of girls (93%) loved or liked their sport a lot, and nearly two-thirds of girls planned to

play in high school and beyond (see Figures 6 on page 13 and Figure 7 on page 14). Liking/Loving the sport was identified as the most prominent factor for predicting girls' intentions to continue playing their sport in the future (see Figure 8 on page 14 and Table 3 on page 15). Although, as a group, older girls were more likely than younger girls to report wanting to play in high school and beyond, fewer older girls reported loving their sport, placing them at higher risk of dropping out.

Aligned with previous research,⁴⁶ the top predictors related to girls' liking/loving their sport were centered around social and mastery aspects of participation and include being with their friends, really liking the coach, not being afraid to try new skills, not being one of the least skilled players on the team, having goals related to their participation in sports, and perceiving sports as very important in their lives (see Table 4 on page 16).

Figure 2. Percentage of Girls' Reported Participation in Organized Sports Activities Over the Past Year



*Other includes any mentions of 2% or less.

Table 2. Organized Sports Activities Participated in Over the Past Year by Athletes' Age, Race/Ethnicity, Family Income and Locale

	Total	7-10	11-13	White	Hispanic	Black	< \$40K	\$40K– \$59,999	\$60K– \$99,999	\$100K+	City	Suburb	Town	Rural
Soccer	32%	35%	27%	31%	37%	22%	26%	28%	33%	34%	29%	35%	30%	28%
Dance	30%	34%	25%	30%	30%	38%	30%	29%	27%	32%	36%	29%	24%	24%
Basketball	27%	26%	28%	25%	26%	32%	24%	26%	25%	30%	31%	23%	21%	35%
Gymnastics	26%	30%	20%	26%	27%	26%	22%	26%	28%	27%	29%	27%	21%	20%
Baseball/ Softball	22%	21%	24%	26%	20%	18%	23%	20%	26%	21%	21%	20%	27%	29%
Swimming/ Diving	21%	23%	19%	18%	23%	21%	15%	17%	20%	26%	26%	22%	12%	12%
Cheer- leading	20%	20%	19%	20%	20%	26%	21%	24%	20%	17%	19%	19%	23%	22%
Volleyball	17%	10%	26%	15%	19%	20%	21%	16%	15%	17%	22%	14%	21%	15%
Martial arts	9%	11%	6%	9%	7%	11%	7%	6%	10%	10%	12%	8%	7%	7%
Track/ cross country	8%	5%	13%	8%	8%	9%	5%	6%	8%	8%	11%	9%	9%	7%
Tennis	8%	9%	8%	9%	6%	6%	2%	3%	7%	14%	13%	8%	1%	3%
Archery	5%	4%	6%	6%	4%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%	8%	2%	5%	6%
Ice Skating	4%	5%	4%	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	9%	7%	4%	1%	1%
Equestrian	4%	4%	4%	6%	3%	1%	1%	2%	3%	6%	5%	3%	2%	4%
Football	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%	5%	6%	2%	1%	3%
Field hockey	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	-	0%	2%	6%	5%	2%	-	1%
Golf	3%	3%	2%	3%	0%	3%	0%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	-	2%
Ice Hockey	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%	6%	1%	-	1%

Bolding indicates statistical significance compared to a corresponding value.

Figure 3. Length of Time Daughter Has Participated in Activity

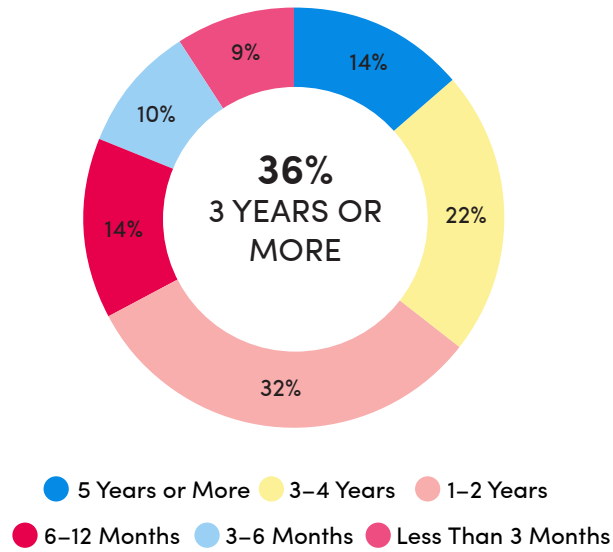


Figure 4. Participation by Team Type

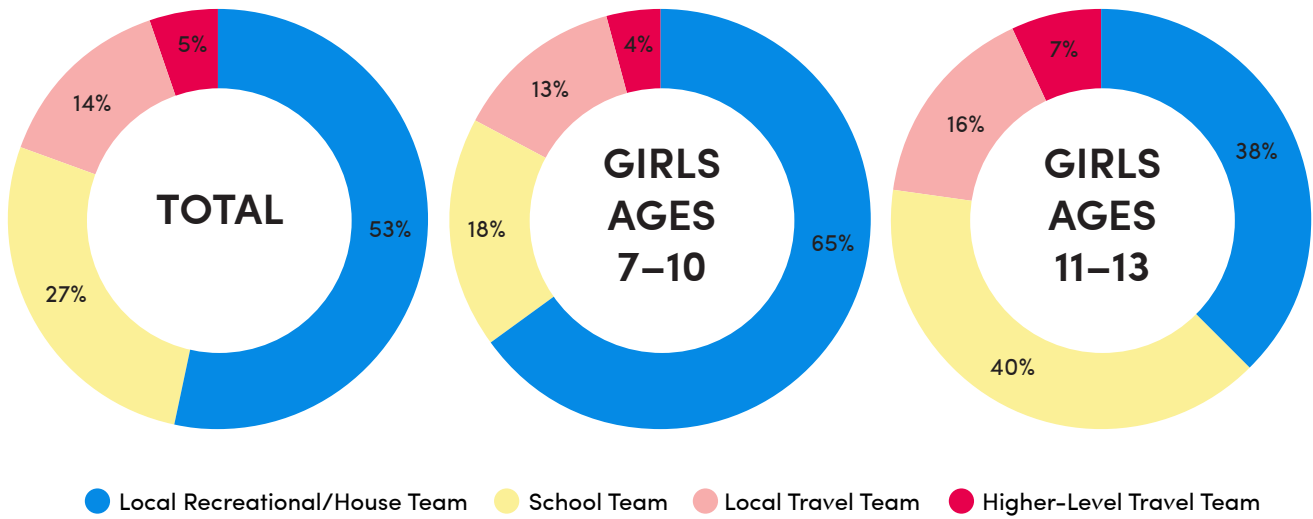


Figure 5. Girl-Only vs. Co-Ed Teams

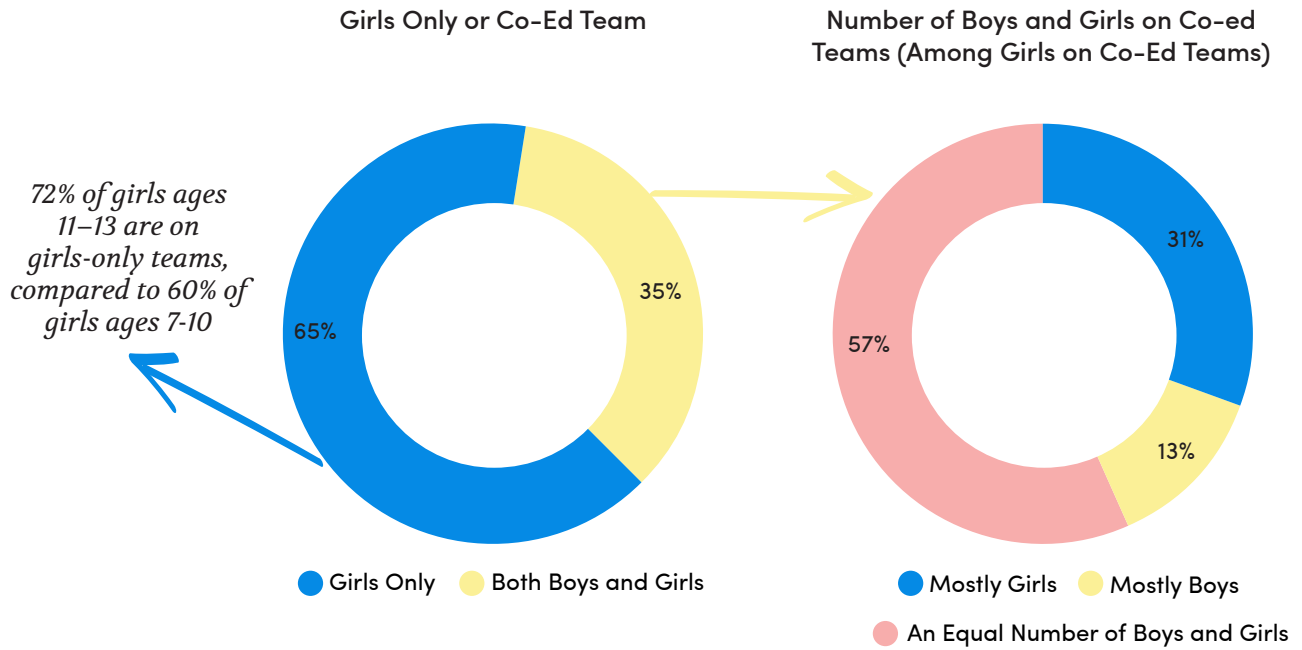
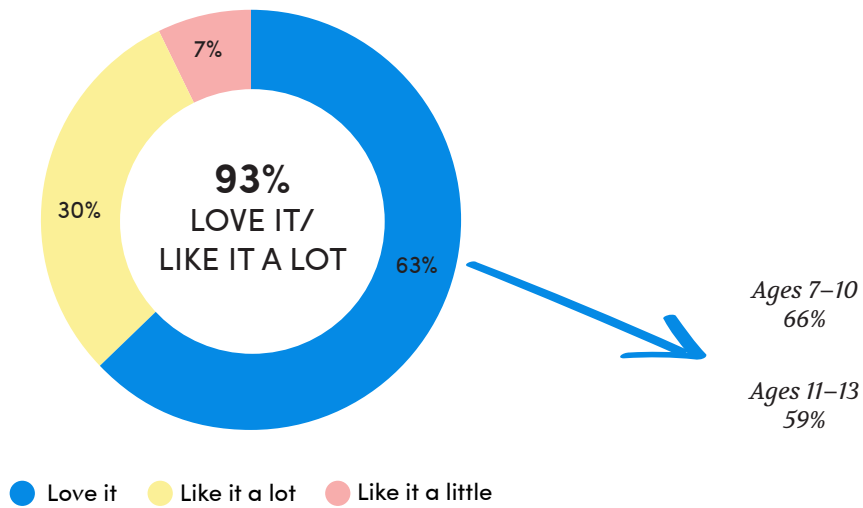
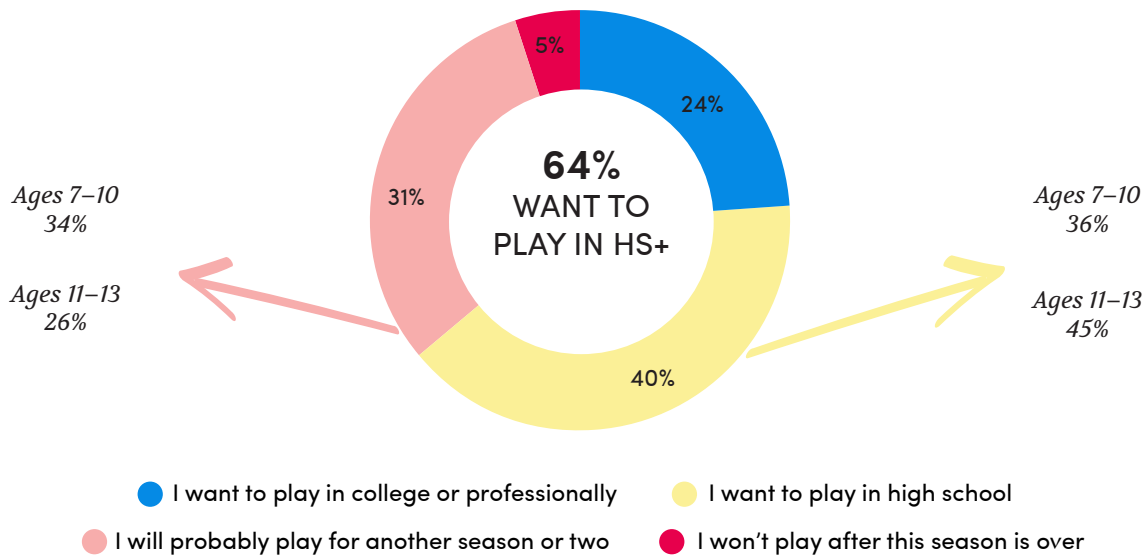


Figure 6. Percentage of Female Athletes Ages 7-13 Who Like/Love Their Sport



No statistically significant differences in ethnicity, income or urbanicity.
 *0% responded "don't like it at all"

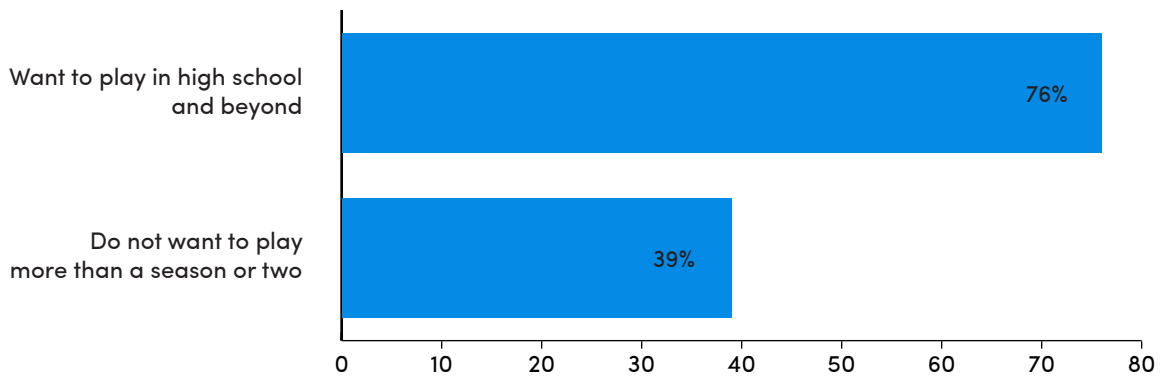
Figure 7. Percentage of Female Athletes Ages 7–13 Who Plan to Keep Playing Sports as They Get Older



No statistically significant differences in ethnicity, income or urbanicity.

Figure 8. Top Predictor of Future Sports Participation: Sport Liking

Percentage of Athletes Reporting They “Love” Sports Who...



A linear stepwise regression analysis was run to determine which items have the greatest impact on likelihood to play in the future and sport liking.

Table 3. Key Predictors of Playing Sport in High School and Beyond – I Want to Play in High School/in College or Professionally

	%	AOR	Sig.		%	AOR	Sig.
How much child likes sports				Being with my friends is one of my favorite things about playing sports			
“Like it a lot”/“Like it a little”/“Don’t like it at all”	39.8%	Reference		Agree a lot	66.6%	Reference	
“Love it”	79.3%	3.77	***	Agree a little	60.5%	1.04	
Importance of playing sports to child				Playing sports is one way I set goals for myself			
Extremely Important	76.9%	Reference		Disagree a little	61.1%	1.13	
Very Important	67.8%	1.29		Disagree a lot	63.1%	1.52	
Somewhat Important	43.7%	0.78		Type of sport			
Not Very Important	28.0%	0.49		Local recreational/house team	56.2%	Reference	
Not Important at all	12.6%	0.17		Local travel team	72.5%	1.77	**
Coach liking				Higher-level travel team	86.3%	3.41	***
Really, really like them a lot	74.7%	Reference		School team	71.2%	1.69	*
Really like them a lot	59.0%	0.71	***	Girl-only versus co-ed sport			
Like them a lot	50.6%	0.55	***	Girls only	66.9%	Reference	
Like them a little	43.4%	0.42	***	Both boys and girls	59.1%	0.73	
Don’t like them at all	74.1%	1.08		Coach’s gender			
Skill level				Man	65.7%	Reference	
About the same as most/One of the least skilled	58.5%	Reference		Woman	63.2%	0.89	
One of the most skilled	75.9%	1.30		Being afraid to try new moves/skills/plays			
Being afraid to try new moves/skills/plays				Agree a lot	47.9%	Reference	
Agree a lot	47.9%	Reference		Agree a little	50.4%	1.82	
Agree a little	50.4%	1.82		Disagree a little	64.4%	2.21	
Disagree a little	64.4%	2.21		Disagree a lot	74.8%	2.73	*
Disagree a lot	74.8%	2.73	*				

Binary logistic regression was used to predict children who indicated they want to participate in sport in high school or college.

% = percentage indicating response within specified category; Sig. = Statistical significance (i.e., $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$); AOR = Adjusted Odds Ratio.

Models also control for race, Hispanic ethnicity, income, parental level of education, parent sex and age of child. Models also adjust standard errors based on the type of sport the child was selected to report on in the survey.

Note that black girls were more likely to indicate playing in high school and beyond.

Table 4. Key Predictors of Sport Liking – How Much Child Likes Sports – Love It

	%	AOR	Sig.		%	AOR	Sig.
Importance of playing sports to child				Being with my friends is one of my favorite things about playing sports			
Extremely Important	86.8%	Reference		Agree a lot	68.9%	Reference	
Very Important	61.1%	0.39	***	Agree a little	54.4%	0.76	
Somewhat Important	35.0%	0.14	***	Disagree a little	56.3%	0.85	
Not Very Important	23.4%	0.07	**	Disagree a lot	52.5%	0.42	
Not Important at all	18.7%	0.11	**	Playing sports is one way I set goals for myself			
Coach liking				Agree a lot	80.3%	Reference	
Really, really like them a lot	85.2%	Reference		Agree a little	53.7%	0.71	
Really like them a lot	49.3%	0.25	***	Disagree a little	47.0%	1.04	
Like them a lot	39.0%	0.16	***	Disagree a lot	48.5%	1.08	
Like them a little	31.1%	0.12	***	Type of sport			
Don't like them at all	50.8%	0.37		Local recreational/house team	60.9%	Reference	
Skill level				Local travel team	68.2%	1.15	
About the same as most/One of the least skilled	56.1%	Reference		Higher-level travel team	80.1%	1.11	
One of the most skilled	77.6%	1.74	***	School team	61.5%	0.96	
Being afraid to try new moves/skills/plays				Girl-only versus co-ed sport			
Agree a lot	66.2%	Reference		Girls only	63.0%	Reference	
Agree a little	44.6%	0.70		Both boys and girls	63.3%	0.93	
Disagree a little	58.6%	1.23		Coach's gender			
Disagree a lot	76.1%	1.92	*	Man	63.1%	Reference	
				Woman	63.2%	0.90	

Binary logistic regression was used to predict children who indicated they "Love" sport.

% = percentage indicating response within specified category; Sig. = Statistical significance (i.e., $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$); AOR = Adjusted Odds Ratio.

Models also control for race, Hispanic ethnicity, income, parental level of education, parent sex and age of child.

Models also adjust standard errors based on the type of sport the child was selected to report on in the survey. No key demographics were significant (i.e., race, Hispanic ethnicity, income and parental level of education).

IV. Community Practices: Exemplary Programs

A. Program Descriptions

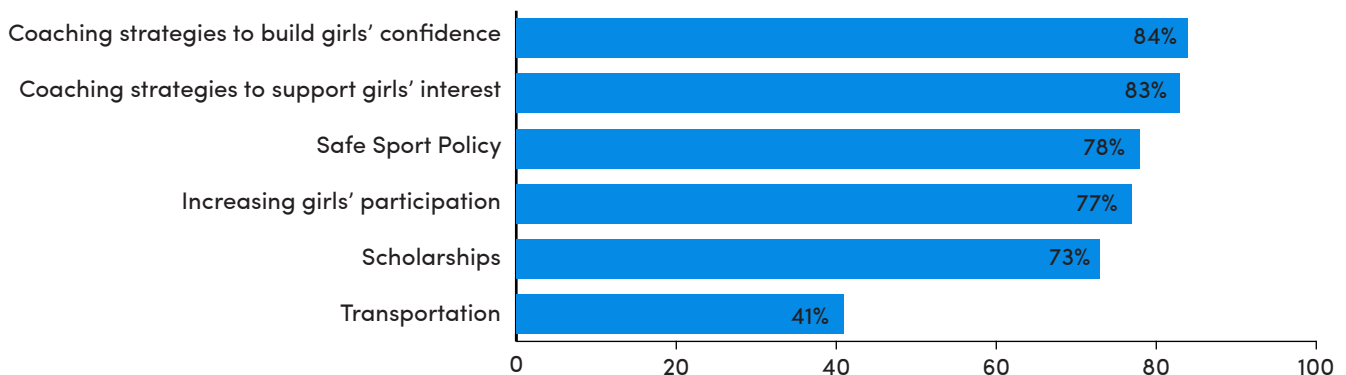
Girls' sports programs were contacted by the Women's Sports Foundation to complete an online survey. The survey included open- and closed-ended questions generated from the research literature and expert interviews. Programs were identified through the Women's Sports Foundation's "Sports 4 Life" program. In 2014, the Women's Sports Foundation launched "Sports 4 Life," with founding partner espnW as a national grant program to increase participation and retention of African-American and Hispanic girls in sports. Since its inception, the program has provided financial and technical support to 134 different organizations. Organizations were selected for support based on their capacity to deliver quality girls' sports programming to underserved girls. All 134 organizations were sent a survey, and 64 (48%) responded (see Appendix III). The purpose of the survey was to identify "best practices" of these programs as generated from the survey responses. The survey results are designed to inform "best practices" for coaches to enhance sport access and opportunity for girls.

B. Specific Program Policies and/or Practices Aimed at Increasing Girls' Participation, Interest, Engagement, and Confidence

Seventy-seven percent of programs have specific policies or practices aimed at increasing girls' participation in sports. In terms of accessibility and the environment, 78% of programs indicated they have a safe sport policy.^{***} Forty-one percent provide transportation, and 73% of programs provide scholarships to cover the cost of participation. Eighty-three percent of programs indicated their coaches use specific strategies to support girls' interest and engagement in their program, and 84% of the programs surveyed indicated they used specific strategies to build girls' confidence and skills in sport (see Figure 9).

Overall, the majority of programs indicated they had specific policies or practices aimed at increasing girls' participation/retention, supporting girls' interest and engagement, and building confidence and girls' skills. Despite this, programs indicated the need for more resources and coaching tools, including coaching handbooks with strategies for recruitment/retention, involvement, and motivation specific for girls; resources

Figure 9. Specific Policies and/or Practices Aimed at Increasing Girls' Participation, Interest, Engagement, and Confidence



^{***} Programs were asked to indicate whether or not they had a safe sport policy in place. Neither a definition nor specific description of what might be included in a safe sport policy was provided.

for parents; resources to encourage women to coach; help with behavioral management; and materials on how to have difficult conversations with girls. Important distinctions must be drawn between advanced programs that serve girls with prior sports experience and have a more competitive orientation and those programs that serve girls without prior sports experience and have a more holistic orientation. Different programs will have different needs based on their philosophy and mission.

C. Coaches' Goals with Girls

Programs were given 15 prompts and asked to rank on a five-point scale (most important, very important, important, somewhat important, not important at all) their coaches' goals with girls.

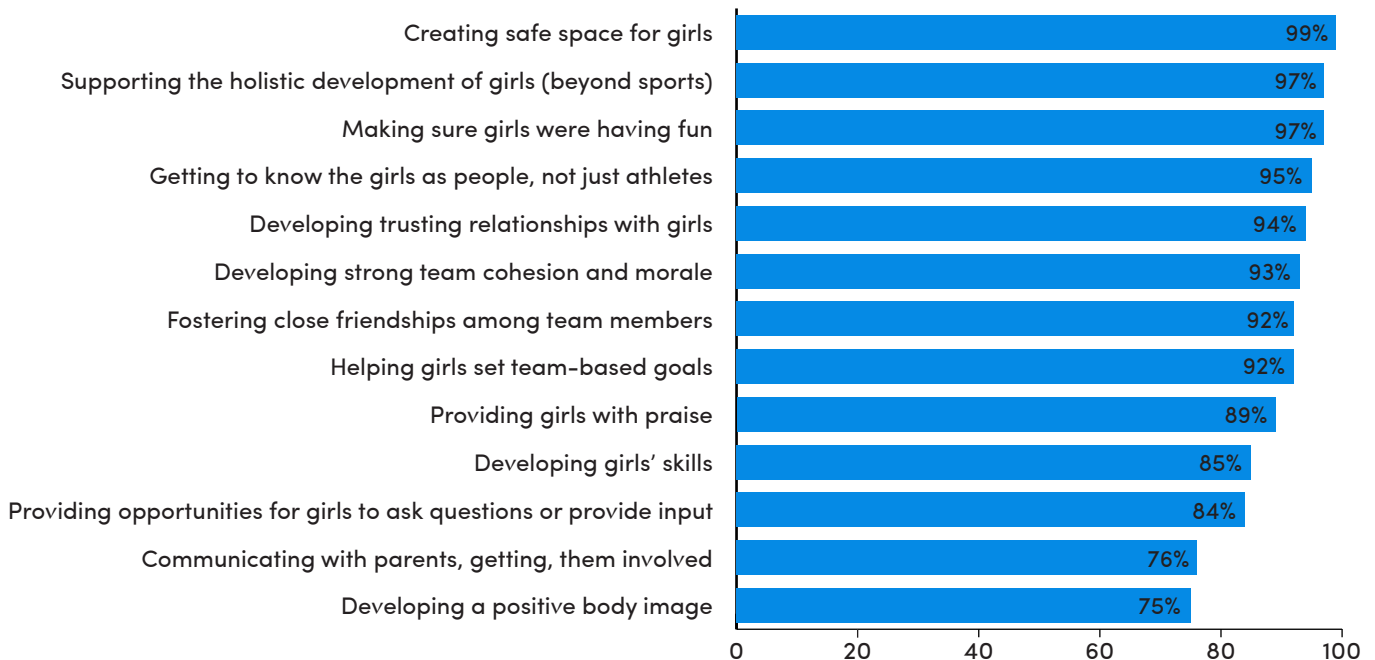
Overall, with the exception of two goals (winning games and calling girls out on mistakes), all 15 goals were either ranked as either most important or as very important by an overwhelming number of programs. In other words, of the 15 prompts regarding coaches' goals with girls that programs were asked to rate, 13 prompts were rated as most important or very important by the vast majority of programs (shown on following page). The exception of two goals, winning games and calling out girls on their mistakes, were instead ranked as not important at all by 37% and 36% of programs, respectively.

Eight of the goals had rankings of at least 90%: creating a safe space for girls (99%); supporting the holistic development of girls (97%); making sure girls were having fun (97%); getting to know the girls as people, not just athletes (95%); developing trusting relationships with girls (94%); developing strong team cohesion and morale (93%); fostering close friendships among team members (92%); and helping girls set team-based goals (92%). Five goals had rankings between 75% and 89%: providing girls with praise (89%); developing girls' skills (85%); providing opportunities for girls to ask questions or provide input (84%); communicating with parents, getting them involved (76%); and developing a positive body image (75%) (see Figure 10).

D. Challenges Coaches Face When Coaching Girls

In an open-ended question regarding the challenges program coaches have experienced when coaching girls, the most common response was engaging and communicating with parents. Thirteen programs expressed some difficulty in getting parents involved in their daughter's participation. As one program explained, "We have a hard time keeping parents involved. We also struggle with the best way to communicate with parents and our girls." Relatedly, programs also indicated families can be unsupportive of their daughter's participation

Figure 10. Coaches' Goals With Girls Rated Most Important or Very Important



due to cultural expectations (girls don't play sports), by relying on girls to take care of family responsibilities or by emphasizing and prioritizing their son's participation over their daughter's. According to one program, "Many of our girls come from a culture that doesn't prioritize girls playing sports. Related to this, many of our girls are asked to fulfill other family responsibilities, such as taking care of siblings." Similarly, another program responded that parents and family often do not value girls playing sports and that older girls are often expected to "have to work to support their family."

Eight programs indicated a lack of resources and financial challenges and another eight identified lack of transportation (which may be related to lack of resources or family concerns). Other open-ended responses included the reliance on volunteer coaches who may not have expertise in coaching the sport. Several programs also noted challenges in recruiting female coaches. Programs also identified challenges related to recruiting and retaining girls, particularly older girls in middle school and high school, and also in gaining interest among girls, especially for girls new to sports. Interest was challenging to sustain. A few programs described that they were competing with other factors or interests in girls' lives, including girls' participation in other activities or sports, and their focus on appearance or consuming social media (see Table 5).

E. Training and Evaluation

More than four out of five (83%) surveyed programs have training for coaches when they first join a program, and 72% indicated they have annual training. Ninety-three percent of programs have women on staff and in coaching roles, and 75% indicated they have program staff who reflect the racial/ ethnic make-up of the girls they serve. Four-fifths (81%) of programs identify role models that resonate with girls, and 85% provide girls opportunities to see women's sports events.

Most programs (87%) said they regularly conduct program evaluation (internal), while only 25% of programs indicated they regularly conduct program evaluation by someone outside the organization. Seventy-seven percent of programs offer peer-leadership opportunities and get girls involved in decision-making. Parent education is a part of 75% of programs, which includes meeting with parents, providing brochures, etc., while 91% of programs state they build relationships with parents and get them actively involved (see Figure 11 on following page).

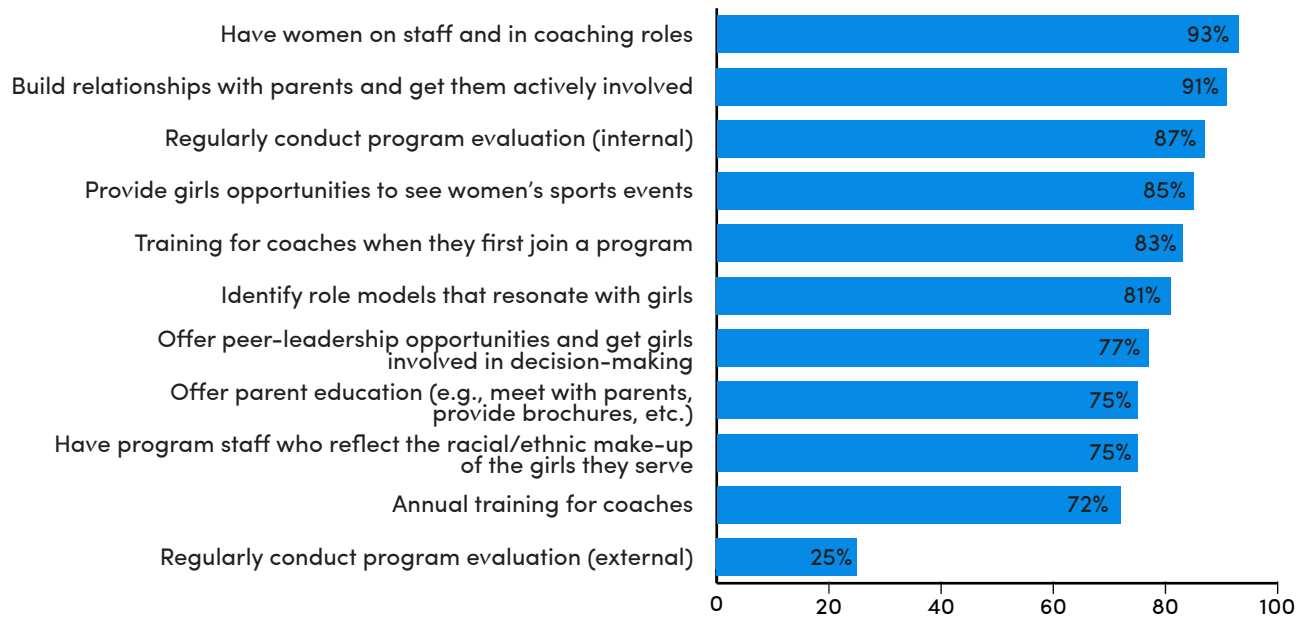
Table 5. Challenges Coaches Face When Coaching Girls

Engaging and communicating with parents
Families are unsupportive of daughter's participation (e.g., culture: girls don't play sports; boys' sports valued over girls, daughter is expected to take care of family responsibilities)
Lack of resources/ financial challenges
Lack of transportation
Reliance on volunteer coaches who may not have expertise in coaching the sport
Challenges in recruiting female coaches
Recruiting and retaining girls (particularly older girls in middle-school or high school)
Gaining girls' interest/ sustaining interest
Competing with other factors or interests (other programs/ sports, social media, appearance culture)



XS Tennis and Education Foundation

Figure 11. Training and Evaluation, Policies and Practices that Exist in Your Programs



Paralympian Jessica Long with Citywide Aquatics, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation

V. Effects of Culture/Socialization, Environment on Girls' Orientation Towards Sport

Cultural factors, such as gender stereotypes about femininity; gender-based expectations from parents, coaches, and teachers; and other cultural and religious norms, shape the extent to which girls participate in sport and physical activity.⁴⁹ While there are many ways cultural ideals of girlhood and boyhood manifest,⁵⁰ specific expressions of femininity and masculinity are dominant, more common, and, as such, expected in our society. For instance, girls receive messages from the culture that an important asset is their external physical appearance (e.g., being “pretty”), that being aggressive isn’t “ladylike,” that they “should” prefer relational activities, and that being emotionally expressive is acceptable. We continue to expect boys to naturally have more physical energy to expend, engage in rough and tumble activities, and be competitive, and we encourage boys to avoid activities and emotions that are too feminine (e.g., “boys don’t cry”). The differences in gendered societal expectations serve as a key barrier for girls’ sport participation. The interviewed experts highlighted several areas in which the gendered culture influences girls’ participation: A) the barriers that emerge from the cultural perceptions of sports as masculine; B) internalization of gendered socialization that results in girls’ orientation towards self and sport to be appearance-bound; and C) the lack of female role models.

A. Cultural Perceptions of Sports as Masculine

Historically, sport has played an important role in the gender socialization of boys and men.^{51,52} The qualities, characteristics, and values our society associates with being masculine (i.e., strength, power, dominance, physicality, aggression, confidence, rationality, stoicism, competitiveness) mirror the qualities, characteristics, and values associated with athleticism. As such, when boys play sport, they conform to societal expectations and beliefs (e.g., “real men play sport”). Sport participation thus socializes boys into conventional masculine roles, expectations, and norms. Given masculinity is defined in opposition to femininity, the aforementioned qualities, characteristics, and values associated with athleticism are often in opposition to the qualities, characteristics, and values associated with femininity (i.e., frailty, submission, compassion, kindness, cooperation, emotional, relational, connected). Girls and women who play sports often have to navigate the conflicting cultural messages about what it means to be a girl/woman and what it means to be an athlete.^{53,54,55} They also must confront stereotypes, expectations, and beliefs that suggest they do not belong in sports.^{56,57} Substantial research has indicated that

teasing and taunting (most commonly by boys) within the sport context is a frequently reported experience for girls and identified as a primary barrier to their continued participation in any physical activities.^{58,59,60} Parents have been shown to provide less encouragement for physical activity, offer fewer sport-related opportunities for their daughters than for their sons, and perceive that sport is more important for their sons than their daughters, and that their sons have greater sport competence than their daughters.^{61,62} Research suggests while boys confront societal expectations that assume they are naturally interested in sports, girls, and especially white, middle-class girls, confront the assumption that their participation is one choice among other options.⁶³ For girls of color, immigrant girls, and girls residing in urban spaces, these cultural assumptions regarding sports as masculine intersect with race/ethnicity and social class to magnify the existing environmental barriers girls’ face in accessing sports.^{64,65} Girls from more privileged backgrounds also encounter these cultural assumptions that link sports with masculinity; however, rather than limiting their participation outright, these assumptions are more likely to manifest within the context of their participation (e.g., teasing, assumptions around choice/interest). For underprivileged families, the cultural assumption that sport is masculine manifests such that sons’ sport participation is prioritized given limited family resources. One program director described these dynamics as a key challenge coaches face when working with girls:

“Some players are seen as ‘masculine’ for playing and mocked or there is a problem with machismo men who do not want their daughters playing because they believe they aren’t strong or smart enough. We also have faced racism from other teams calling our players ghetto or using derogatory terms. We also still see brothers as a priority, and when there is a conflict the sisters are usually the ones who lose out.”

In contradiction to the numerous cultural messages that tell girls that sports are “for boys,” our national sample of girl athletes and their parents both highly endorsed (97%) that sports are as important for girls as they are for boys, and 75% of girls and 70% of their parents reported that it is extremely or very important that they play sports (see Figures 12 and 13 on following page).

Exemplary programs also expressed goals and policies that deliberately relayed messages to girls that sports are for them. One program stated, “Our programming is built solely for girls starting out in sports. We have found that many girls hesitate to participate in coed sports and

Figure 12. Parents' Perceptions of the Importance of Daughters' Participation in Sport

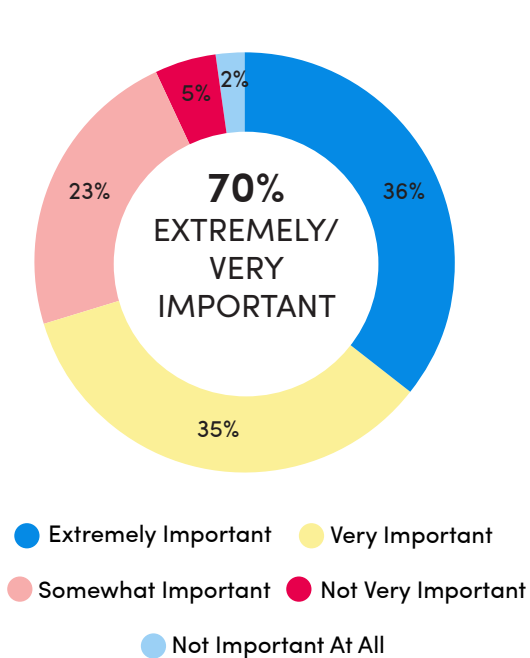
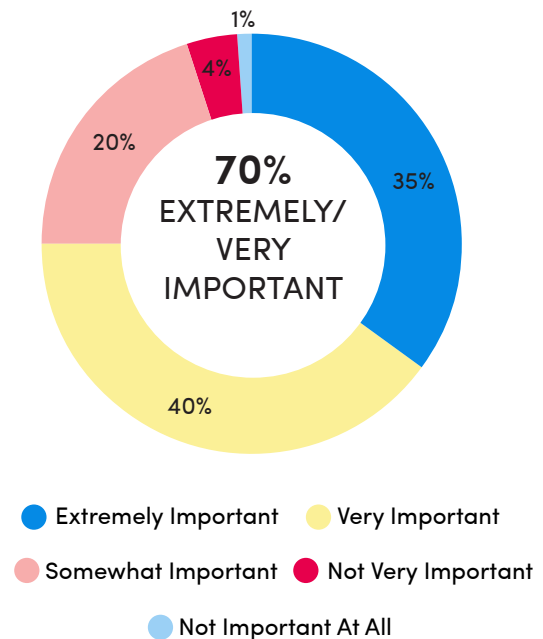


Figure 13. Athletes' Perceptions of the Importance of Their Participation in Sport



more advanced sport settings, so we have worked to mitigate that in the following ways: 1. All of our instructors are female. 2. We tier all practices and clinics by age and/or skill level. 3. We provide any clothing[sic]/equipment needed. 4. Participants can opt in/out to any activities that they choose."

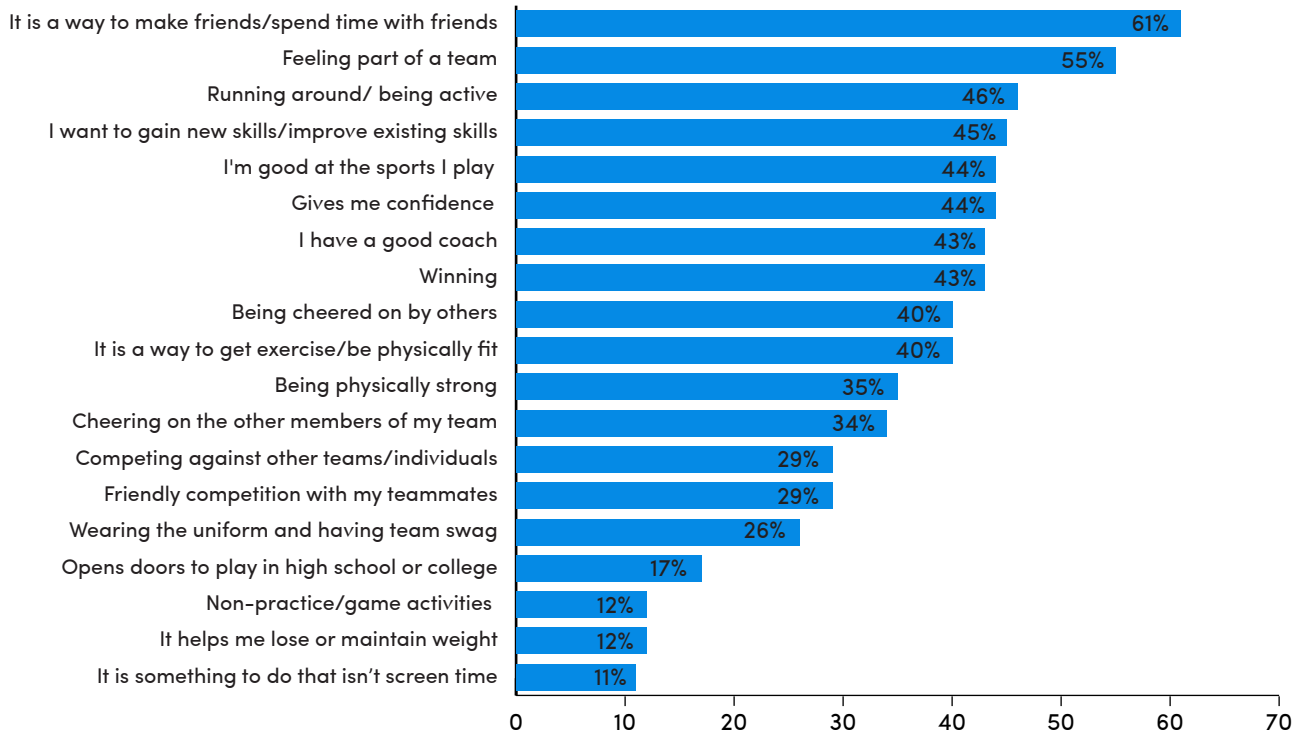
Most parents also reported providing some form of instrumental and/or emotional support for their girls' participation in sport. Despite competing interests, the young girl athletes in our study identified sports as one of their favorite activities, a virtual tie for first with "hanging out with my friends." However, these girls did report experiencing some of the gendered challenges of being a female athlete. For example, over one-third of the girls reported that sometimes boys made fun of them or made them feel uncomfortable while they practiced.

The cultural beliefs of competitiveness as a masculine trait have been another way girls have been socialized away from sport. Such assertions set feminine-ascribed qualities of cooperativeness in opposition to competitiveness, resulting in culturally endorsed assumptions that girls are more inclined (have greater preferences) towards cooperation and building/maintaining social relationships, and thus, less interested in engaging in competitive activities. These assumptions still permeate girls' sport experiences despite girls consistently expressing the

enjoyment of the competition as a primary reason for their participation in sport.^{66,67} Similar to previous research,⁶⁸ social aspects like making friends/spending time with friends, feeling like they are part of a team, and having a good coach that the girls liked emerged among the national sample of girls surveyed as the most common reasons girls enjoyed sports. However, this was not in juxtaposition to girls' enjoyment of the competitive aspects of sports. In fact, competitiveness, including liking to win, competing against other teams/individuals, and even friendly competition among teammates, were other predominant reasons girls provided for why sports are "fun" (see Figure 14 on following page).

Programs grapple with the concept of competitiveness for girls as reflected in the program survey. Nearly all programs surveyed ranked "making sure girls were having fun" as among the very important or most important goals programs have for their coaches. In contrast, many programs indicated that "winning games" as a goal for coaches was "not important at all." The responses of several programs to a question regarding the challenges coaches have experienced coaching girls underscores this perceived dichotomy. One program described "they (girls) want to be competitive" as a challenge. Several other programs also discussed the de-emphasis or deliberate avoidance of competition and championed the non-competitive aspects of the program. For example,

Figure 14. Athletes' Perceptions of What They Like about Playing Sports



one program stated, “We build a positive, inclusive environment, focus on mastery (rather than competition), and develop strong relationships from coach to girl, and girl to girl.”

Instead of perceiving fun and competitiveness as opposing goals, interviewed experts proposed the need to redefine perceptions of sports as a context that is capable of providing both. Experts suggested that coaches can be trained to establish a sport context that honors both the social side and competitive side of sport. One expert stated, “We can provide a great social experience without minimizing competitive options.” Another expert pointed out that coaches who fail to meet girls’ needs/interests for competitiveness “are too soft on girls, don’t push them enough, treat them as fragile.” Such treatment by coaches sends messages to girls that they are different from and/or not as capable as boys, or that their sport involvement is not taken as seriously, all of which can result in girls’ lower perceived competence and sense of belonging. The expert further explained, “You don’t have to be soft, just nice. Do not infantilize or underestimate girls’ ability. Treat girls as powerful, strong, very capable individuals.”

B. Appearance Culture

Girls are more likely than boys, especially with the multiple changes associated with early adolescence, to be more conscious of their bodies, self-objectify (i.e., think about their bodies as an object for others to evaluate), be more self-critical, and compare themselves to others.^{69,70,71,72,73} The desire for a slim body and fears of “masculine feminine bodies” have been shown to affect girls’ decisions to participate or drop out of sport.⁷⁴ Experts also discussed how these challenges directly influence girls’ initial and continued sports participation, where girls view themselves from outside their bodies (critical evaluation of themselves based on how they think others see them) rather than living inside their bodies (focused on what their bodies can do, their capabilities, strength, etc.). Experts explained how this orientation towards one’s body in sport results in players being more susceptible to negativity as well as negative self-comparisons, heightened self-consciousness when engaged in physical activities, and heightened appearance-related concerns and/or motivation orientations towards sport (e.g., participating to “look better” or to “lose weight”). In turn, girls’ preoccupation with appearance, body image, and self-consciousness has been shown to be primary factors discouraging sports enjoyment and continued

participation.^{75,76,77,78} One expert said, “Can we get girls to value the positive aspects of what sports can do for them in regards to their bodies? Do they like the way sports builds their strength, physical skills, mastery? And can we offset their focus on these cultural standards of appearance (like weight status)?”

In the current study, appearance-related factors, like “maintaining/losing weight or looking better” was a minimally endorsed reason for why girls reported participation in sports (11% indicated “a lot”; 21% said “a little”), where a focus on mastery (like wanting to gain new skills, gaining confidence, and being good at the sport) and fitness (like being active, getting physically strong, getting some exercise) stood out as frequently stated reasons for their participation (see Figure 11 on page 20). Although only 11% of girls in the national sample provided appearance-based reasons as a primary reason for participation, having 31% expressing any appearance-related reasons for their participation still warrants further attention and intervention.

C. Lack of Female Role Models

Despite the growing population of girls participating in sports, a 2015 survey conducted by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association reported that only 27% of the more than 6.5 million adults who coach youth teams up to age 14 are women.⁷⁹ Instead of coaching, women in organized youth sports often serve the role as “team mom,” responsible for coordinating schedules, bringing snacks, or performing other care-giving tasks.⁸⁰ Female coaches in girls’ sports have significant impact on girls’ participation that goes beyond skill transfer. Female coaches are important role models for girls and enhance girls’ feelings of social inclusion. The presence of female coaches also challenges the negative cultural messages girls receive about their participation.⁸¹ Expert interviewees echoed the potential importance of having a female coach to offset cultural and environmental barriers. Experts asserted that girls may more readily identify with, and see a female coach as a mentor and/or as a role model “for what is possible” which, in turn, can help girls boost their confidence and self-efficacy. For example, one expert stated, “Girls need to see women in leadership roles; this helps with girls’ own confidence and psyche in playing sports.” The presence of a female coach also actively demonstrates to the girls that they belong and are valued in the space, countering stereotypes and/or gendered norming. One expert stated, “Girls who have female coaches have the opportunity to see that ‘if she can do this, then I can too.’” And several experts supported the notion that female coaches are more likely to buy into the importance/value of girls sports right away because “they get it,” and that female coaches are “better positioned to develop trust” with girl athletes. That is, girls are more likely to believe a female coach’s advice because they’ve “lived it.”

Among our national sample of young female athletes, 75% had at least one female coach (head or assistant) present, with 60% of those being a head coach (or a single female coach). This overrepresentation of female coaches is largely due to the large number of all-female teams and an overrepresentation in sports in the sample that are perceived to be more feminine (e.g., dance, gymnastics). Sports perceived as more masculine were more likely to be led by a male coaching staff (see Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6. Gender of Coach by Type of Sport

Type of Sport	Gender of Coach	
	Man	Woman
Baseball/Softball	64.3%	35.7%
Basketball	57.4%	42.6%
Cheer	9.6%	90.4%
Dance	10.7%	89.3%
Gymnastics	14.3%	85.7%
Martial Arts	68.2%	31.8%
Soccer	66.0%	34.0%
Swimming	32.7%	67.3%
Track	51.0%	49.0%
Volleyball	25.1%	74.9%
Other	47.6%	52.4%

Table 7. Gender of Child’s Coach by Girl-only Versus Co-Ed Team

Type of Team	Gender of Coach	
	Man	Woman
Girls only	33.6%	66.3%
Both boys and girls	50.7%	49.2%

Of the exemplary programs surveyed, 92% have women on their staff and 91% have women in coaching roles. Programs commonly reported that hiring female coaches and having girl peer coaches were important practices/policies to increasing girls’ participation and retention, in part due to the importance of girls having female role models. As one exemplary program explained, “We work to staff women coaches and provide positive female role models. Our coaching staff is 49% women, so our girls are constantly seeing women in and around the game.”



Southern California Golf Association

Another program discussed the important role coaches have in terms of leading change to create more inclusion of women coaches who reflect their communities: “Coaches within larger organizations can help lead change by pushing for inclusion of more women, especially women that represent the populations not just in their programs but in their cities. Organizations should focus on how to support their female players and use their resources to supplement training for coaches, extra activities for girls, and more.”

Several exemplary programs mentioned recruiting girls and young women from high schools and colleges to serve as coaches and peer mentors.

“It is an organizational priority to provide mentoring opportunities for our participants. We do this by bringing in high school and college players and coaches to facilitate workshops and clinics. We want our girls to see the different pathways that sport can create for them. We also believe that by engaging with these mentors, our participants will become more excited about participating in sports.”

“We prioritize hiring female coaches/mentors. We do targeted recruiting for our high school program to ensure half of the spots are filled with girls. We have leadership lessons and curriculum that specifically targets girls.”

Yet, several programs indicated having challenges in recruiting female coaches. As one exemplary program offered, “We have a hard time recruiting qualified, female coaches.”

Girls and their parents generally have very positive opinions of their coaches with 79% of both girls and parents reporting that their coach is very good or excellent. In support of experts’ insights, girls who reported

“really” or “really, really liking their coach a lot” were more likely to have a female head coach (82% vs. 73%) or any female on the coaching staff (81% vs. 72%) than girls who only liked their coach “a little” or “don’t like them at all.”

Girls with female coaches also more commonly identified their coaches as positive role models (57% of girls with female coaches vs. 50% with male coaches) and someone who looks like themselves (25% of girls with female coaches vs. 18% with male coaches), and were more likely to state that their coaches listen to the concerns and ideas of the players (45% of girls with female coaches vs. 38% with male coaches) and were someone you can count on (53% of girls with female coaches vs. 45% with male coaches). Parents also echoed the expert panel and exemplary programs, viewing female coaches as important role models. A father of an 8-year-old girl stated, “I think we as parents sometimes forget the importance of a woman coaching girls’ teams; it allows the kids to see that there is someone that looks like them in a position of power, and I think that is empowering for my daughter.” A mother of a 12-year-old girl said, “Her coach is a female who serves as a great example, having played soccer when she was her age and into college.”

Despite female coaches receiving more positive ratings than males (82%), nearly three-quarters of girls think very highly of their male coaches, and coach gender did not significantly impact parents’ opinion (liking) of the coach. Such findings highlight that gender is only one element for supporting girls’ sports participation. Similarly, the expert panel commonly argued that it is “necessary to have females on the coaching staff, but not sufficient.” They suggested that even female coaches will need a gender-informed model of coaching, and perhaps the support of other champions and role models in the girls’ daily lives (e.g., parents, teachers, peers) to help promote engagement and offset the barriers girls experience in the sport context.

VI. Coaching Practices and Strategies

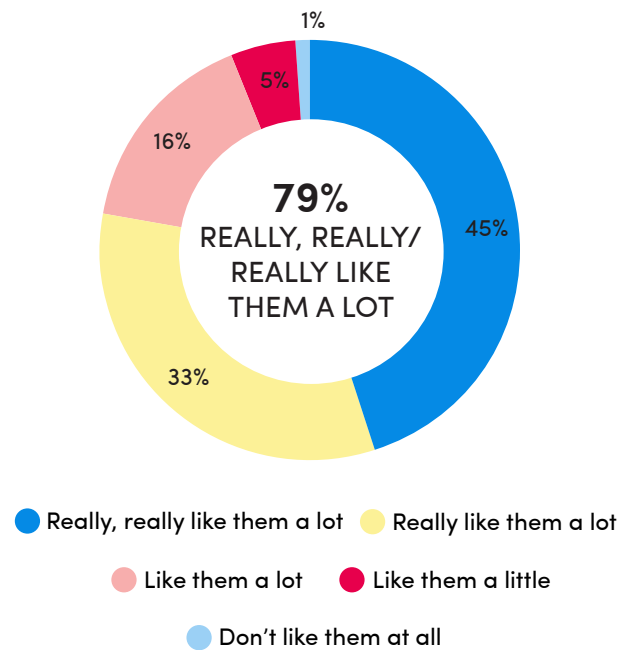
Within the youth sport environment, coaches are a primary determinant of the nature and quality of the sport experience for players. The attitudes and values coaches transmit, the goals and priorities they promote, and the nature of their interactions with athletes (and their parents) can markedly influence players' enjoyment of the sport, perceived competence, and motivation and commitment towards long-term engagement.^{82,83,84} Consequently, coaching problems or the dislike of a coach is a primary determinant of youth attrition in sport,^{85,86,87} with girls more likely than boys to attribute the decision to leave sport on negative coaching experiences.⁸⁸ Given the numerous barriers to girls' sports participation, there is critical need to examine girls' own personal experiences in sport and the degree to which specific coaching and program-level practices impact girls' participation, motivation, and retention. Building a stronger understanding of girls' sport developmental needs, and ways that we can optimize their motivational and socio-emotional strengths to counter stereotypes and gender norming, will contribute to designing more effective coaching practices and strategies for fostering girls' interest, growth, and continued engagement in sport.

Aligned with previous work, girls' liking of the coach was directly associated with future intent to keep playing sport, importance of playing, and love for the sport among the national sample of girls surveyed (see Figure 15). Experts, as well as youth and parents, identified several features of coaching practices and strategies that are critical to liking the coach, loving the sport, and having intent to continue playing in the future. These features align with two major dimensions of coaching critical to girls: A) the importance of a mastery-based coaching approach, and B) the critical need to build supportive relationships within the context of sport. Although girls and parents both generally rate coaches positively across these two primary dimensions, about one-third of parents said their child's coach needs more training, and that the coach falls short in a number of different areas.

A. A Mastery-Based Approach

Aligned with what researchers describe as a developmental mastery-based approach,^{89,90,91,92} the expert panel stressed the importance of coaches being positive and promoting (emphasizing, valuing) goals of fun, effort, dedication, and skill development. Effective coaches view mistakes as opportunities to learn and adjust, and provide good technical instruction.^{93,94} Eighty-three percent of programs indicated their coaches use

Figure 15. Percentage of Female Athletes Ages 7–13 Who Reported Liking Their Coach



these specific strategies to support girls' interest and engagement in their program. Strategies included emphasizing fun, focus on skill development (either sport-based or life skills) or mastery over competition; motivating girls by emphasizing progression in skill level, as well as creating inclusive spaces. Among these strategies, 36% of exemplary programs noted "calling girls out on their mistakes" was "not important at all" for coaches' goals with girls, while 85% of programs indicated "developing girls' skills" as a most important or very important goal for coaches to have with girls. Panel experts warned of the alternative potentially toxic (or unsupportive) "ego-based" climate in which coaches were punitive, practiced favoritism, and emphasized winning (over effort) as the primary goal. As one program explained:

"We believe as an organization that if girls are taught to understand the concepts of the game so they can implement and execute what they learn in a game rather than having a coach direct them, their confidence is significantly higher. Often there is a perception that because girls have less experience because of the trend in having girls start competing at an older age, there is a

need to give lots of direction. As a staff, we would rather see our players succeed because they understand what they are doing, and if that means losing games the first couple seasons it isn't a big deal to our organization, we are more concerned with their long-term development as players and people."

Another program described their mastery approach as a scaffolding process: "We scaffold many of our activities at practice so that our girls can practice many of the sport skills they are learning before applying them in a more complex game setting. Additionally, we intentionally create opportunities for our more veteran girls participants to support our newer girls and lead aspects of practice to support their growth as leaders."

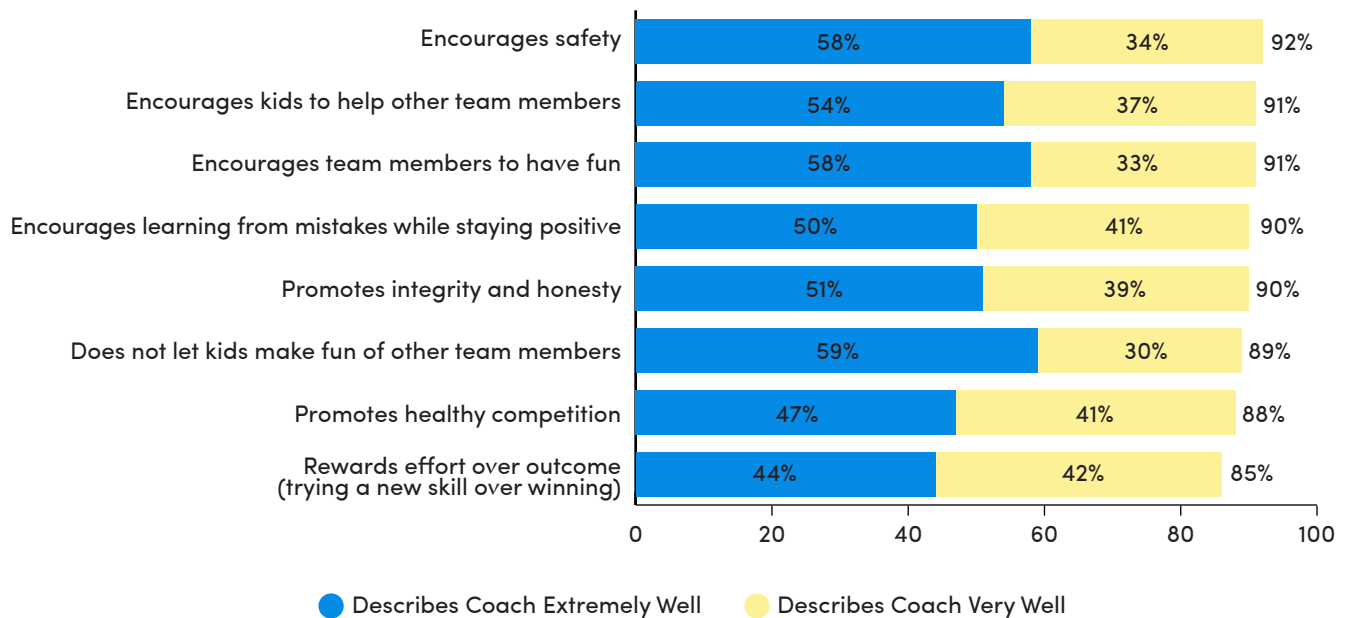
Establishment of a developmental, mastery-based climate^{95,96,97,98} has been related to numerous positive outcomes, including achievement, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation, and long-term engagement in sport. In contrast, components of an ego-climate, such as being punitive for mistakes, practicing favoritism (including more play time) to players/athletes with the highest skill set and/or those who are instrumental to winning, and only stressing the importance of skill development in relation to the goal of winning games (not to development of each athlete and their self-confidence and enjoyment), have been shown to foster high levels of performance anxiety/worry, low levels of enjoyment, low self-esteem/confidence

in the sport, and higher risk of drop out.^{99,100,101,102} Girls have been shown to experience greater negative effects of an ego-oriented climate than do boys.¹⁰³

Surveys administered to girls and their parents set out to assess coaches' ability for establishing a mastery climate through several dimensions, including: 1) an emphasis on fun, effort, and skill development, 2) goal setting, 3) communication, including autonomy support, and 4) and youth sport performance anxiety (worry).

1. **Emphasis on fun, effort, and skill development.** The vast majority of girls (85% or more) reported that their coaches created a positive environment that encourages safety, fun, healthy competition, as well as rewards effort or trying a new skill over winning, encourages learning from mistakes while staying positive, and promotes integrity and honesty (see Figure 16). However, when asked directly about whether the coach places more emphasis on winning or fun/skill development, only about half of parents and girls said their coach is more focused on team members having fun, and 83% of parents agreed that coaches should put more priority on having fun. Compared to girls ages 7–10, older girls in the sample reported that their coaches placed less emphasis or focus on having fun, and liked their coaches less, indicating a possible developmental shift in coaching and coach-player relationships during these early

Figure 16. Athletes' Perceptions of Whether Their Coaches Create a Positive Environment



Percentages of "describes extremely well" and "describes very well" do not always equal total due to rounding.

adolescent years. As expected, coaches that are more focused on team members having fun and developing skills were rated as more liked by their players than those coaches focused on winning (96% vs. 21%, respectively). Although less differentiated, coaches that are more focused on team members having fun and developing skills were also more liked by their players than coaches who equally focused on both fun/skill and winning (83%) (see Table 8). Girls' preference was the same whether the coach was male or female. Girls who had coaches who are more focused on winning were also more likely to report that they will not play the sport after this season is over. However, girls whose coaches focus on fun and skill development, without much focus on winning, were not likely to plan on playing sports in high school or beyond either. Instead, coaches who focus on winning along with an emphasis on fun and skills appear to be the best combination to foster girls' intentions to continue playing through high school and beyond have. Thus, contrary to previous

research, which indicated that winning did not matter for girls' experiences of fun, liking the sport, the team, or the coach,¹⁰⁴ findings from the girls' survey indicate that a goal of winning in the context of a mastery-oriented environment is ideal for promoting continued engagement in the sport.

Contrary to these findings of the importance of striking a balance between fun/skill development and competition (winning), several programs appear to heavily endorse this gendered notion of girls' disinterest/dislike of competition, adamantly advertising their programs as "non-competitive" and expressing goals of avoiding any types of comparisons between players or others. For example, one programs stated: "Our program is non-competitive, emphasizing each girl's personal best rather than comparing to others." Helping programs to identify differences between healthy and unhealthy forms of competition is critical so that program do not steer too far away from healthy forms of competition (e.g., liking to win, striving for a personal/team best,

Table 8. Differences by Athletes Perceptions of Coaches' Focus on Winning, Fun/Skill Development, or Both

	A Winning	B Fun/Skill Development	C Equally both
Coach Liking:			
Net: Really, Really like them a lot/Really like them a lot	60%	83%A	78%A
Net: Like them a little/Don't like them at all	21%BC	3%	5%
Intent to Play in the Future:			
I won't play after this season is over	14%BC	4%	4%
I will probably play for another season or two	28%	36%C	25%
I want to play in high school	30%	39%	43%A
I want to play in college or professionally	29%	21%	28%B
Worries:			
Not playing well	29%	37%	49%AB
Letting others down	33%	25%	38%B
Messing up during a game or competition	46%	50%	57%AB
Not being as good as my teammates	38%	39%	41%
Being better than my teammates	24%BC	5%	5%
Losing	28%B	18%	31%B
NET: Any Worries	94%AB	82%	87%B
Coach Gender:			
Male	42%	37%	42%
Female	58%	63%	58%

Lettering indicates significant difference at the 95% level.

competing against other teams/individuals, and even friendly competition among teammates) that foster girls' engagement and long-term participation.

2. **Goal setting.** Another way the expert panel suggested to identify a coach that is mastery- or growth-oriented, as well as a primary way that coaches can nurture growth is through having girls set personal goals based on what they want to achieve. One of the experts elaborated, "By setting goals, coaches can help girls have a mindset that they can always improve. If a girl says, 'I can't do X,' a response of the coach/team should always be 'YET!'" Among our sample of young teen athletes, goal setting was found to be a particularly important part of coaching so that having a coach who sets goals is not only predictive of girls liking the coach, but also to girls loving the sport and intending to play in the future. Over 70% of girls reported having goals related to playing their sport, with the majority of these goals focused on their own improvement in the sport, whether that was becoming better generally, working on a specific skill or making the high school team. For example, one 11-year-old girl expressed, "I just want to keep improving and be the best I can be," and a 13-year-old girl stated, "I want to be good enough to make my high school volleyball team in 2 years." Even the younger preteens noted many short- and long-term improvement goals. For example, one 7-year-old stated, "I want to

get better and be able to play for a long time. I want to play on my high school team when I get older," and a 9-year-old discussed her goal of "landing my axel." Although less common, some girls also discussed even higher achievement goals of acquiring college sport scholarships or becoming professional athletes (e.g., "I want to be in the Olympics"—8-year-old girl). A small handful also mentioned social-based goals alongside their sentiment of improvement, like "making lasting friendships" (13-year-old).

The two most popular benefits that parents wanted their girls to acquire from playing sports are to have fun and to be physically fit/healthy (see Figure 17). Dads were more likely to want girls to learn sport-specific skills, experience a competitive environment, and have the ability to play at a higher level. Moms were more likely to want girls to develop life skills, become more confident, and have time away from screens. Parents' goals differed developmentally, with parents of girls ages 7–10 more likely than parents of older girls to want their child to learn sport-specific skills (23% vs. 16%), while parents of girls ages 11–13 were more likely than parents of younger girls to look forward and view sports as a way for their child to have an opportunity to earn college scholarship/help her get in to college (17% vs. 13%). Parents of girls who love their sport also were more likely to want their child to have the ability to play at a high level in the

Figure 17. Parents' Goals for Their Daughter's Participation in Sports



future (15% vs. 9%) and have the opportunity to earn a college scholarship (17% vs. 10%) than parents of girls who did not “love” their sport. There were also some differences by race/ethnicity and household income, with parents of black/African-American and Hispanic girls and parents from lower-income households most likely to want their child to have the opportunity to earn a college scholarship.

When asked to identify coaches’ successes in coaching girls, exemplary programs frequently identified girls’ overall development as both a goal and a success. Seeing girls develop as “capable women” and “strong women” who go on to college was a point of pride for many exemplary programs. Several programs noted how their participants played sports at a higher competitive level, either in high school, in college, or professionally, and this was attributed as a coaching success. Moreover, these college-aged former participants would come back to the programs and serve as coaches or mentors for the girls.

Programs discussed various ways to help facilitate girls’ goal setting. For example, one program stated, “Girls are recognized for setting and working towards their own individual goals. We purposefully focus on all of the ways to be a good participant and teammate: cheering each other on, validating other girls’ efforts and experience, recognizing and verbalizing our own needs in a positive way. We try to strike the balance between pushing and encouraging while letting kids know that it’s ok to need a break or have an off day.”



Harlem Lacrosse

3. **Communication.** Feedback about performance has also been shown to affect girls’ perceptions of their sport ability, effort/engagement, and expectations for future success.¹⁰⁵ A consistent body of research^{106,107,108} has demonstrated that when a coach has a communication style that includes the use of positive and encouraging feedback for both successful and unsuccessful performances, teen athletes are more likely to have a task orientation to sports (focus on effort over outcome), are more confident, and more open to the information and feedback they receive from their coach. In contrast, punitive feedback for mistakes (yelling at players, benching players because of a mistake), and the provision of positive reinforcement to only those most competent or instrumental for winning, can undermine youth enjoyment and perceived sport competence, and can evoke performance anxiety, negative affect, a fear of failure and disapproval, and reduce players willingness to try new skills.^{109,110,111} This research also suggests that, while coaches should not use punitive feedback when athletes make mistakes, ignoring mistakes can be just as detrimental. Rather, providing encouraging and corrective information following errors is particularly effective for promoting continued engagement and a strong sense of efficacy and confidence in female athletes.^{112,113,114}

One exemplary program described how they address feedback and communication: “We make sure to find something positive every day that a girl is doing. We pay attention to each girl’s progress and help her identify frustrations or anything else that might be keeping her back. Maybe she is comparing herself to others, or doesn’t believe she can learn, believes she isn’t an athlete, or simply hasn’t had an experience of pushing through to find the reward of hanging in. We try to notice and tease out these kinds of challenges. We make mini-groups within practices so girls know they are counting on each other and that their success as a group depends on supporting each other.”

The expert panel also emphasized the importance of having an autonomy-supportive style of coaching in which a coach listens to the concerns and ideas of players and provides players ample opportunities to ask questions, provide input into what they like, and what can be improved on. Eighty-four percent of programs identified “providing opportunities for girls to ask questions or provide input” as most important or very important for coaches’ goals with girls. Among our national sample of girls ages 7–13, coach communication was highly predictive of girls’ love for sport and their intentions to play in high school or beyond (see Table 9 on following page). For the most part, girls (and parents) rated their coaches as highly competent on key communication dimensions identified by previous research and expert interviews.

A clear majority of girls (80% or higher) reported that their coaches are knowledgeable about the sport; do a great job of coaching girls of all skill level; give clear, consistent instructions, including clear explanations for the reasoning behind skills and drills; listen to the concerns and ideas of players; and help them develop as a player/athlete (see Figure 18 on following page). Coaches' autonomy-support did vary somewhat by girls' age and the gender of the coach with younger girls (ages 7-10) and girls with a female coach most likely to report having a coach that listens to the concerns and ideas of players.

However, despite girls' positive endorsements of coaches' communication style, one-third of coaches were perceived as being "too hard on the team." For example, one girl, aged 12, explained that "she [her coach] made us feel dumb for messing up." These coaches are less likely to be described by the girls and their parents as nice/friendly, encouraging, caring, or a good role model, and were perceived to be less likely to treat players with respect or encourage players to learn from mistakes while staying positive. They were also less likely to prohibit players from

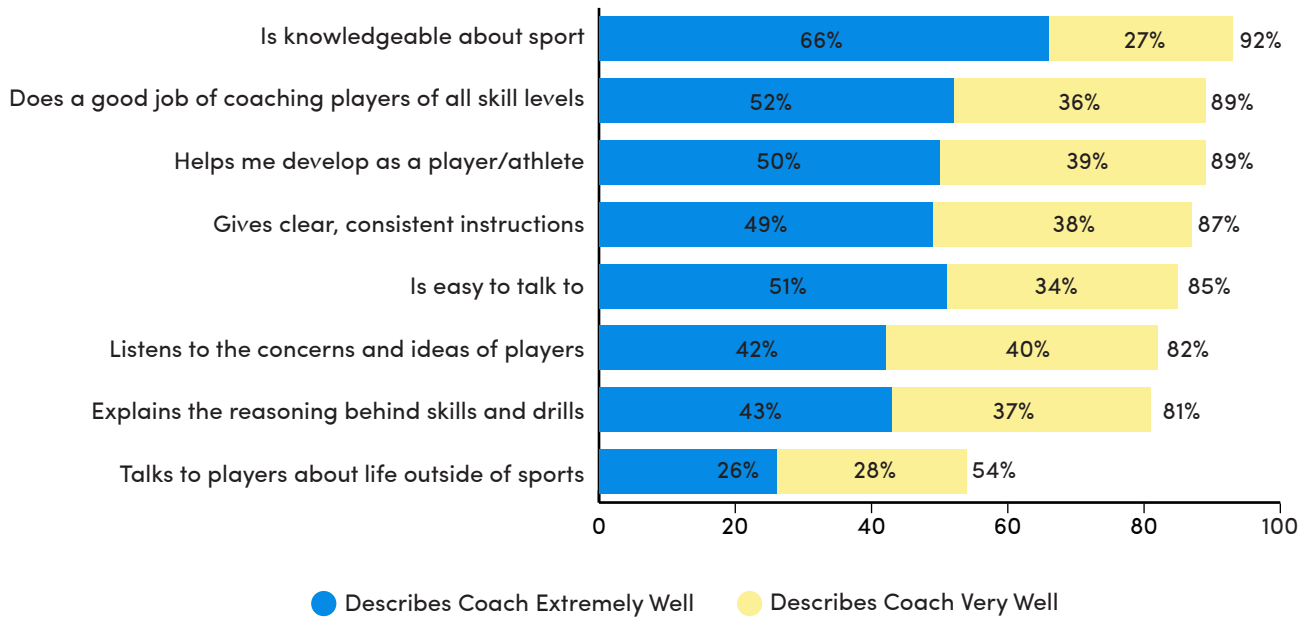
making fun of others on the team or encourage players to help other team members, which can result in an even less-supportive sport context. Parents were also less likely to agree that these coaches are good with kids their child's age, and more likely to agree that the coach needs more training. Consequently, girls who said their coach can be too hard on the team were more likely to worry about being better than their teammates (15% vs. 4%), and, although less differentiated, were less likely to like their coach (40% vs. 48%) than girls who do not think their coach is too hard on the team. However, having a coach that is perceived as too hard on the team did not affect their likelihood to want to continue playing in high school and beyond. With an overrepresentation of these coaches found in the higher level (more competitive) sport contexts of girls, this may also reflect coaches' difficulties prioritizing girls' developmental needs in a highly competitive setting. One expert advised, "Girls like to be challenged. Coaches should present skills as challenges and an opportunity, not as a threat. Give girls an opportunity to play every position, swim every stroke."

Table 9. Crosstab/Chi Square Analyses Examining Differences by Athletes Ratings of Coach as Providing a Positive Environment, Engaging in Positive Communication, and Caring

	Total	Positive environment	Coaching & Communication	Caring & Trust
Total	51%	52%	47%	54%
Love sport	62%	63%	57%	65%
Like sport a lot to don't like it at all	34%	35%	31%	36%
Want to play in high school or beyond	57%	58%	53%	60%
Do not want to play more than another season or two	48%	43%	37%	45%
White	52%	53%	47%	55%
Hispanic	54%	55%	51%	57%
Black	53%	53%	48%	57%
Income: <\$40K	49%	50%	45%	52%
Income: <\$40-60K	54%	55%	50%	58%
Income: <\$60-100K	52%	53%	47%	55%
Income: <\$100K+	51%	52%	48%	54%
City	54%	54%	51%	57%
Suburb	50%	52%	46%	53%
Town	50%	53%	46%	52%
Rural	51%	52%	47%	55%

Average top box scores across all positive dimensions are shown here. **Bolded text indicates a statistically significant difference.**

Figure 18. Athletes' Perceptions of Their Coach's Communication Style

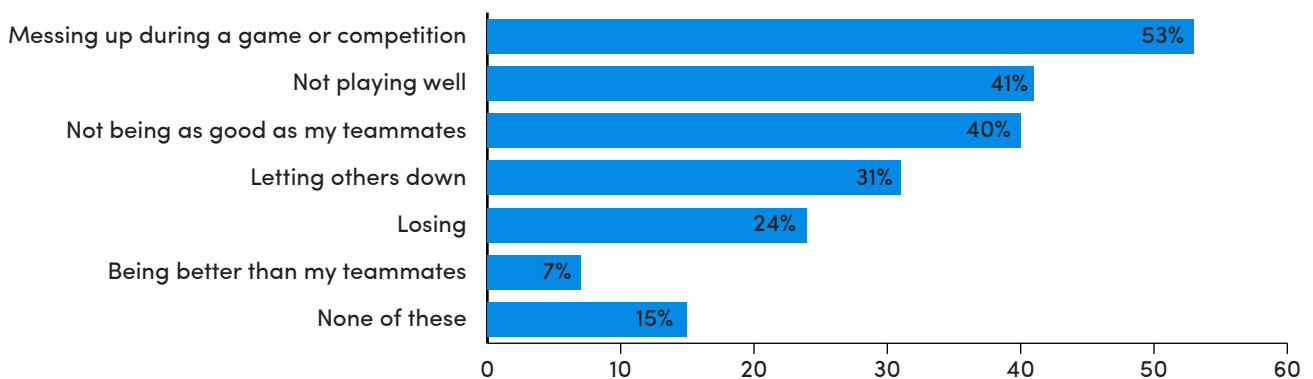


Percentages of "describes extremely well" and "describes very well" do not always equal total due to rounding.

4. **Sport Performance Anxiety/Worry.** Sport performance anxiety has been shown to have numerous deleterious effects on young athletes, including poor sport performance, loss of enjoyment, avoidance of organized sport experiences, burnout, and attrition.^{115,116} Girls are found to report experiencing greater levels of stress for coach-related stressors (e.g., arguing with the coach; coach was upset with me; treated unfairly by the coach), and

employ more approach (i.e., seeking out solutions/ problem solving) and avoidant (i.e., avoiding the stressor) coping mechanisms compared to boys.¹¹⁷ Most girls (85%) reported worrying about at least one item asked about in the survey when it comes to playing a sport, most commonly messing up, not playing well, or not being as good as others (see Figure 19). The pressure increased as the girls get older, with those aged 11–13 more often worried about

Figure 19. Percentage of Athletes Who Reported Sports Performance Worries



not playing well and letting others down. Some of the worry expressed by the girls may be reflective of girls' level of competitive play, with those who plan to play in high school or beyond more likely to worry about not playing well (44% vs. 36%), messing up during a game or competition (55% vs. 48%) and losing (27% vs. 20%) compared to girls less committed to long-term engagement in sport. However, the type of concerns girls report were also, at least partially, reflective of their exposure to a particular coaching approach. For example, girls who have a coach who is focused on winning are more likely to report worrying about losing and being better than their teammates, whereas the worries indicated by girls with coaches who are equally focused on fun/skill development along with winning were more team-oriented, including worrying about not playing well, messing up during a game, and letting others down. Girls with coaches who focus primarily on fun and skill are less likely to experience any sport performance worry (see Table 8 on page 28).

B. Building Supportive Relationships

Across all expert interviews, building supportive relationships within sport was highlighted as a critical ingredient for engaging and retaining girls in sport. Experts discussed nurturing a range of key relationships, including those between the coach and player, among the players through friendship and team cohesion, and between other influential individuals that are involved in the athletes' daily lives such as parents, friends, and others in their schools and communities. Girls report a decrease in social support for physical activity/sport during the transition from childhood to the early teens, and less exposure to active role models,¹¹⁸ making these connections even more important during the critical years from age 7 to 13.

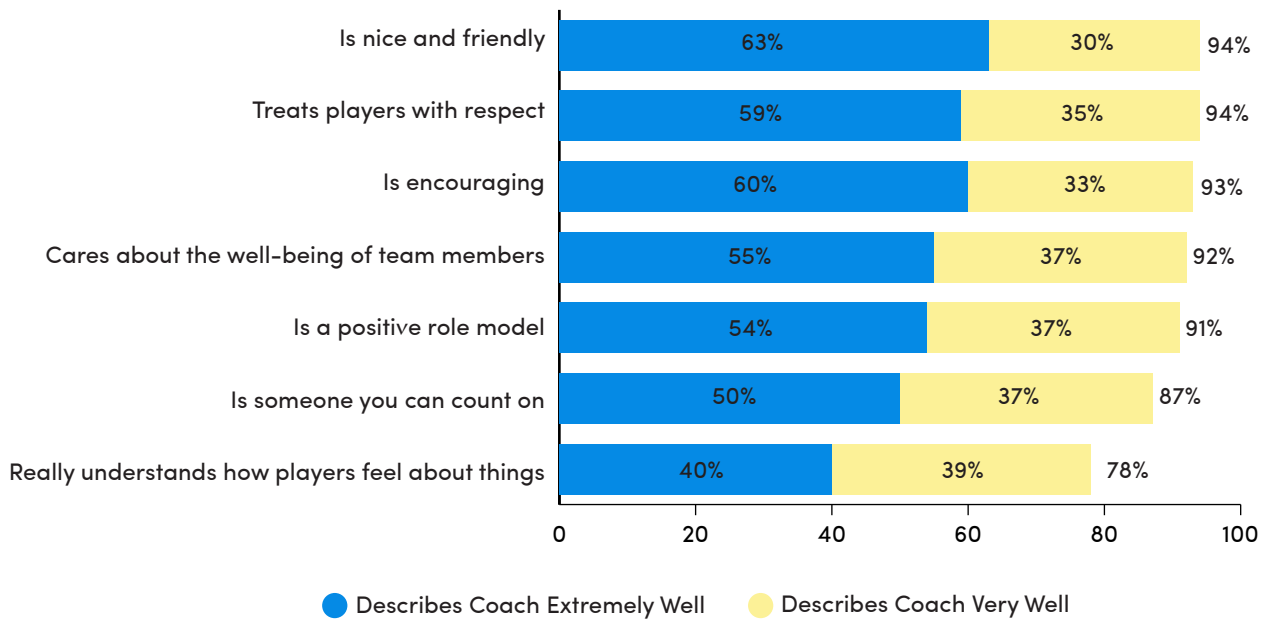
1. **Coach-Player Relations.** Experts described a healthy coach relationship as one in which the coach "treats players as whole people, not just as athletes," describing the importance of establishing genuine trusting relationships with the girls, which include "real conversations, real connections," and where coaches can be a source of support, someone with whom the girls feel comfortable talking. These characteristics of the coach-player relationship were also echoed by the girls, with one 11-year-old athlete explaining, "A coach needs to be more than a coach but a friend you trust and feel confident about." Some experts discussed specific ways in which coaches can help foster these relations including being transparent, "authentic (not perfect)," and self-aware ("have the coaches tell the girls who they are and how they operate") and to make sure they call each player by the right name (avoid mispronunciations, undesired nicknames, or general references of "you

guys"). Many experts also discussed the importance of getting a "temperature" on the girls' daily lives. For example, one expert stated, "Get a gauge on what state they are in when they come to practice, how was their day today, do they need someone to talk with, could they use a little extra boost today, some support, some encouragement?" One expert described having a "Talking Tuesday" in which the coach takes 5–10 minutes of time in the beginning of practice to talk about what interests the girls. Such support from coaches may be especially important for girls, who experience greater barriers related to participation in sport, and may have only the coach and their teammates as supports/socializers who value their participation in sport.

Programs highly endorsed the importance of coaches getting to know the girls as people, not just athletes (95%); developing trusting relationships with girls (94%), and creating a safe space for girls (99%). As one exemplary program explained, "We create an environment that develops and supports their assets, agency, access to services, and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risks and to stay safe, secure, and be protected and live without fear of violence or retribution. We encourage and recognize youth, while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive." Yet 22% of exemplary programs indicated they did not have a safe sport policy. More research is needed regarding what programs at the national level are doing to address this disconnect between the stated importance of safe spaces with lack of policy among local programs.

In our national sample, the vast majority of girls (90% or more) reported that their coaches are nice and friendly, caring, encouraging, and treat players with respect (see Figure 20 on following page). A 13-year-old athlete explained, "They are really focused on helping me do and perform my best and that they actually CARE about me!" Most girls also identified their coaches as a positive role model, easy to talk to (85%) and someone they can count on (87%). However, fewer girls felt their coach really understands how players feel about things (78%) and even fewer reported that coaches talk to players about life outside of sport (54%). Moreover there were differences in the girls' experiences by both girls' age and the gender of the coach. Overall, younger girls (7–10) were more likely to report that their coaches are nice/friendly and to view them as role models. Across all ages, girls were also more likely to view their coach as a role model and someone you can count on when their coach was female. In turn, a coach-player relationship that was characterized by caring and trust was associated with girls' love of the sport and plans to play in high school and beyond (see Table 9 on page 31).

Figure 20. Athletes' Perceptions of Their Coaches as Caring and Trusting



Percentages of “describes extremely well” and “describes very well” do not always equal total due to rounding.

2. **Friendship and Team Cohesion.** Fostering friendship and a sense of cohesion with the other players on the team was also identified by the expert panel as critical for meeting girls’ social goals/needs and supporting girls’ continued engagement. Exemplary programs also listed building strong team cohesion and morale as a most important or very important goal for coaches (93%). An athlete’s feeling that she is close to her teammates, that she and her team are aiming to reach the same goals, and the feeling that they are united and cohesive in this endeavor have been consistently shown to predict players’ motivation and continued participation in sport.^{119,120} Aligned with previous research indicating that team cohesion and a sense of belonging is related to girls retention in sport,^{21,122} girls reported social aspects like making friends, spending time with friends, and feeling like they are part of a team as top reasons why they love their sport (see Figure 14 on page 23), and several girls included social goals (e.g., building lasting friendships with teammates) as one part of the personal and team goals they had for their participation. Parents also list “having a sense of belonging and/or a way to make friends” as one of the top desired benefits of sports participation for their child (see Figure 17 on page 29).

To establish friendships among team members and a strong sense of team cohesion, experts advised that

coaches need to promote teamwork (cooperative skills), and set clear expectations that teammates should help one another, and should never make fun of one another. One expert even suggested developing a buddy system to help nurture friendships and a sense of belonging on the team. The vast majority of girls reported that they have coaches that encourage these cooperative behaviors (e.g., 91% encourage teammates to help one another; 89% do not let kids make fun of other team members). However, coaches of younger girls appear to be somewhat more supportive in these ways, as well as coaches who focus on fun and skill development. Coaches who emphasize winning were much less likely to promote cooperative support among the players than other coaches (see Table 10 on following page).

As one exemplary program described, “Some workouts are focused more on individual effort, while others challenge girls to work together as a team. All allow girls to focus on interpersonal relationship building among teammates in a safe environment. We ask coaches to jump in and run or walk with the girls to model that activity and engage fully.”

Fairness, in terms of access, decision-making, and playing time, as well as equal treatment of all players was also discussed by experts as critical for promoting players’ engagement and growth in sports

Table 10. The Association of Athletes’ Perceptions of Coaches’ Focus on Differences in Coaches’ Abilities to Establish a Positive Mastery Environment, Communication, and Caring

Describes Coach Extremely/Very Well:	A Winning	B Fun/Skill Development	C Equally both
Is knowledgeable about sport	80%	93%A	95%A
Encourages safety	77%	95%A	93%A
Treats players with respect	76%	96%A	95%A
Does a good job of coaching players of all skill levels	76%	91%A	89%A
Cares about the well-being of team members	76%	93%A	95%A
Promotes healthy competition	76%	87%A	92%AB
Promotes integrity and honesty	75%	91%A	93%A
Is encouraging	75%	97%A	94%A
Encourages kids to help other team members	73%	94%A	93%A
Is nice and friendly	73%	96%A	96%A
Helps me develop as a player/athlete	73%	91%A	92%A
Does not let kids make fun of other team members	72%	91%A	90%A
Is a positive role model	72%	94%A	93%A
Gives clear, consistent instructions	71%	89%A	90%A
Explains the reasoning behind skills and drills	69%	81%A	85%A
Encourages learning from mistakes while staying positive	69%	94%A	92%A
Is someone you can count on	69%	89%A	90%A
Can be too hard on the team	69%BC	28%	27%
Encourages team members to have fun	68%	96%AC	92%A
Rewards effort over outcome (trying a new skill over winning)	67%	89%A	85%A
Is easy to talk to	65%	87%A	87%A
Listens to the concerns and ideas of players	65%	85%A	84%A
Really understands how players feel about things	64%	81%A	79%A
Talks to players about life outside of sports	54%	54%	56%
Is someone who looks like me	53%BC	41%	37%

Lettering indicates significant difference at the 95% level.

and advised coaches to not compare players’ abilities to one another (pit one player against another) or treat players differently. Experts explained that special treatment of players can further undermine athletes’ confidence/self-efficacy, cooperative skills/teamwork, and team cohesion. One expert explained that girls are often quick to notice differences around fairness, with the awareness of a lack of fairness likely to “fester” and negatively influence girls’ experiences. Favoritism, in terms of playing time was found to be a common experience of some of our sample of female

athletes and their parents. While half of parents said playing time is distributed equally, the remaining half of parents reported that it is driven by either skill (35%), effort (31%) or experience/seniority (20%). Another small percentage of parents mentioned a parent-based favoritism, with play time dictated by who the child’s parent(s) are (6%). In turn, girls’ perceptions of how coaches determine playing time factored into coach liking with coaches that reward effort over such factors as skill, seniority, or parent-based favoritism being more well-liked by the girls

(32% vs. 25%). Other social components of fairness emerged from girls' and parents' responses to the open-ended questions about why they liked the coach. For example, one 10-year-old girl explained, "I like that he treats boys and girls the same," and a mother of an 8-year-old girl stated, "He makes every player feel important and part of the team."

- 3. Fostering Parent-Involvement: A Community of Support.** Aligned with previous research,¹²³ experts argued that girls will benefit from having multiple champions in their daily lives to counter the cultural and social barriers that girls face in playing sport (e.g., teasing, exclusion, inequality, feeling less valued). Thus, they encouraged coaches to build a community of support for the girls by actively seeking support from players' parents, peer networks, school administrators, teachers, and other community partners.

The exemplary programs discussed their efforts to build this community of support through ensuring coaches were female, creating certain programmatic activities in which girls could be mentored by other older girls, planning events during which college-aged women would interact with girls in the program, and building relationships with parents and getting them actively involved.

Parents have been identified as primary socializers for promoting youth initial and continued participation and nurturing players' growth in sport, providing both tangible/instrumental and emotional supports for participating.^{124,125,126} Among our national sample of athletes and their parents, the more a parent participated, the more likely it was that their daughter loves their sport, intends to play throughout high school and beyond, and thinks playing sport is very/extremely important. For these reasons, experts advised that coaches should put great efforts forth in getting to know all of their players' parents, building relationships with them, and providing opportunities for them to get involved and have input. They also discussed how coaches should ensure that parents are educated on the value of sports and in turn can serve as interpreters of experience, role models, and an educational resource to their daughters. Parents' perceptions of the importance/value of sports for their child and perceived ability of their child, have been shown to be major predictors of both parents' proactive socialization of their child into sport, and their child's own motivations (value and perceived ability) and engagement in sport.^{127,128,129,130}

Overall, parents had positive opinions of their daughter's coach, with eight out of 10 parents expressing that they thought the coach was very good or excellent and a vast majority said that coaches were able to set a positive mastery-based sports environment, communicate effectively with the girls,



Chicago Red Stars

and were caring. Most parents were educated on the value of sports, with the majority of parents (70%) viewing that it is extremely or very important for their girls to play sports, and that their daughter is equally (58%) or more skilled (33%) than their teammates. Aligned with previous findings,^{131,132,133,134} girls who have parents who think they are good at sports and think that it is important for them to play the sport, were more likely to also hold these beliefs. In turn, girls who reported believing that their parents think it's very important to play sports, were more likely to also believe that it is important, love their sport, and plan to play through high school and beyond.

Most parents also reported having opportunities to play some role in supporting their daughters' sports participation (see Figure 21 on following page). The majority of this support was in the form of tangible/instrumental support, including driving her to games and practices (81%), buying equipment /extra gear (57%), providing food for the games (41%), and paying for their daughter to play throughout the year (39%). The primary emotional support provided to youth was in the form of being a spectator at games and practices (76% and 72%, respectively). Few parents served as coaches (11%) or team moms (26%), and surprisingly, only about 50% of parents practiced with their daughters outside of team practices. Reflective of historical gender gaps in sports, dads were more likely to have been personally involved with sports when younger or currently and, in turn, twice as likely to have coached any girls' sports team than moms, perpetuating the underrepresentation of female role models on the coaching staff and limiting mothers' involvement to supplemental roles (team mom, supplying food). Furthermore, issues

Figure 21. Parents' Involvement in Their Daughters' Sports



around sport access must also be addressed, with parents from high-income households more likely to buy equipment/extra gear and pay for multiple opportunities to play throughout the year, as well as more frequently attend practice and games/competitions. Although parents of white girls were most likely to coach or instruct the team, parents of black/African-American girls were most likely to sign up to be a team parent, and parents of Hispanic girls were most likely to sponsor the team, think it is extremely or very important for their girl to play sport, and encourage their daughters to follow women's sports figures in the media.

While 91% of exemplary programs responded they build relationships with parents and get them actively involved, and 75% of programs indicated parental education was a part of their programs, including meeting with parents and providing materials, when exemplary programs were asked what challenges coaches face when coaching girls, the most frequent response was engaging and communicating with parents. Relatedly, programs also identified challenges they encounter related to the ways families can be unsupportive of their daughter's participation due to cultural expectations (girls don't play sports), or by relying on girls to take

on family responsibilities or by emphasizing their son's participation over their daughters. As one exemplary program explained, "Many of our girls come from a culture that doesn't prioritize girls playing sports. Related to this, many of our girls are asked to fulfill other family responsibilities, such as taking care of siblings. Additionally, as an after-school program, much of our programming happens in the evenings. As the days get shorter, our parents are often hesitant to send their daughters to practice since it gets dark so early and can be dangerous for our girls to travel alone."

This suggests that more is needed to engage and educate parents. One program shared that they have a girls' program coordinator position with the explicit purpose of engaging girls and their families: "This family engagement allows us to better identify and address obstacles our girls face to participating in sports. Additionally, we have established a girls' leadership group that provides a team-building opportunity for our girls to get together off the field."

VII. Conclusions

Gendered cultural norms are still a major barrier for girls' participation in sports. The multi-informant panel of experts, exemplary programs, girl athletes, and their parents all identified several ways in which cultural perceptions of sports as masculine, and girls' internalization of these gendered cultural messages impact girls' experiences in sport. Employing a gender lens, the current report identified critical coaching and program-level practices that can counter these major barriers and actively reduce the gender gap and disproportionate drop-out rates in girls in sport.

Findings suggest that coaches are critical agents for supporting girls' love for and continued engagement in sport. Girls want a sport experience that both focuses on having fun and challenges them. Many girls reported that their coaches created a positive environment that encourages safety, fun, and rewards effort and trying new skills over winning. Despite girls defining

improvement and competitiveness as part of what they describe as fun, coaches and programs serving girls were found to de-emphasize winning, did not call girls out on their mistakes, and championed the "non-competitive" aspects of the program. Striking a balance between fun, skill development, and competition (winning), viewing mistakes as opportunities to learn and adjust and providing good technical instruction are key areas in need of improvement to support girls' participation needs. This necessitates a re-definition of competitiveness that moves past simplistic masculinized ways of defining competitiveness (winning at all costs, external outcomes), to definitions of healthy competition that involve skill development, growth, and progression in individual players and their goals (as identified in the program data) along with friendly competition with teammates and competing against others (as defined in the girls' survey data).



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Coaches should also help nurture a range of key relationships within sport, including those between the coach and player, those among the players through friendship and team cohesion, and between other influential individuals that are involved in the athletes' daily lives, including parents, friends, and others in their schools and communities. Establishing consistent messaging across all groups of role models and mentors can make a major difference in offsetting the gendered cultural barriers that girls face in sport. Although girls generally perceived their coaches as caring, friendly, and respectful, providing coaching strategies that help coaches connect with their players, demonstrate that they understand how their players feel, and talk to players about life outside of sport are critical areas in need of further development. Similarly, while coaches are generally doing well encouraging the development of friendship and cohesion among players on the team, they could benefit from education on various additional strategies for building connection among players and ensuring fairness. Along with coaches and fellow players, parents were also found to be a particularly important relationship for promoting girls' love for and long-term sport participation in sport. However, the most frequent challenge programs reported when coaching girls was engaging and communicating with parents. Sport programs and coaches will need help developing methods to improve the involvement and effectiveness of parents so that they can serve as key interpreters of experience, role models, and an educational resource to their daughters. This may involve the provision of education for parents on the value of sports and ways to be positive and supportive of their athletes. Findings also suggest a clear need for well-developed policies on how to 1) establish safe spaces for girls, 2) provide more female coaches/role models who can actively demonstrate to the girls that they belong and

are valued in the space, and 3) counter stereotypes and/or gendered norms.

Overall, the majority of exemplary programs indicated they had specific policies or practices aimed at increasing girls' participation/retention, supporting girls' interest and engagement, and building confidence and girls' skills. Despite this, programs indicated the need for more resources and coaching tools, including coaching handbooks with strategies for recruitment and retention for girls' involvement and motivational strategies specific for girls; resources for parents; resources to encourage women to coach; help with behavioral management; and materials on how to have difficult conversations with girls. The programs also made important distinctions between advanced programs that serve girls with prior sports experience and have a more competitive structure and those programs that serve girls without prior sports experience and have a more holistic structure. Resources provided to coaches will need to be tailored to meet the needs of girls within these different types of programs.

This report highlights several critical ingredients needed to offset the numerous barriers girls experience in the sport context and support girls' participation and retention. Findings can be used to inform coaching education and practices across sport to help create a sport climate and coaching dynamic that encourages girls of a critical age (ages 7–13) to fully participate, develop, and persist in sport so that they can reach their personal and sport potential. Consequently, improvements in sports climate and coaching will contribute to reducing the disproportionate drop-out rate among girls in sports beginning at early puberty and close the gender gap in sport participation.



Laila Ali, WSF Past President with 13-year-old Khouri

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Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation

Appendix I: Expert Interview Participants and Protocol

Gender-Informed Coach Project Expert Interviewees

Alison Carney, *independent consultant, facilitator, advocate and researcher in sport for development and social change*

Elizabeth Daniels, Ph.D., *Associate Professor, Psychology, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs*

Megan Chawansky, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Health and Sport Sciences, Otterbein University*

Diana S. Cutaia, *Founder, Coaching Peace*

Julie Foudy, *Founder, Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy; World Cup, Champion Soccer Player*

Kelly Kratz, *Lead Trainer, Positive Coaching Alliance*

Phaedra Knight, *Girls' and women's rugby coach; Three-time World Rugby Cup player and World Rugby Hall of Fame member*

Lauren Rauscher, Ph.D., *Director, Women's Leadership & Mentorship Program, Associate Professor, Sociology, Robert Morris University*

Joanne Smith, *Founder and Executive Director, Girls for Gender Equity*

Interview Questions

Narrative: [Introductions]. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. We know you are quite busy, and so we appreciate your time and willingness to help.

It might be helpful to share with you some background. For our study, we are interested in learning more about young girls (ages 7–13) and their experiences participating in organized sports. We know that positive youth coaching experiences are critical for engaging girls, especially given the unique challenges girls encounter, whether that be societal, cultural or peer/ family based. Girls don't necessarily need a completely different approach to coaching but they do need a coaching perspective and skill set that is sensitive to the unique challenges girls face.

We are hoping to learn more about this topic from you, given your own experiences and expertise. We have a few broad questions we'd like to ask you (listed below). Please know that there are no right or wrong answers. We are here to learn from you, and we appreciate your personal perspective on these topics. As we go through the discussion, if you have any questions, feel free to ask.

If there is a question you do not wish to answer, or cannot answer, please feel free to say so. If at any time, you would like to end the interview, you may do so. Do you have any questions for us before we get started? Can we have your permission to audio record our conversation today?

Section 1: Barriers [Time allotted: 15-20 minutes]

In the first set of questions, we are interested in learning more about what you think are the barriers to girls' sports participation and how sports programs address those barriers.

1. You may be familiar with the WSF's research on the gender gap in sport participation rates [check here, if not share data].

What do you think are some of the major barriers that contribute to the gender gap in sport?

Prompt:

- Individual level barriers (e.g., limited confidence, physical self-efficacy, and negative attitudes about body image; stress/ burnout)
- Socialization-level barriers (e.g., parents/ teacher/ coach expectations, gender stereotypes, values, tangible support (from family, school, community, culture, etc.)
- Macro level (e.g., program policies, access)

Prompt: Any additional factors that should be considered? Safety concerns, and environmental barriers?

2. Of those barriers you just identified, which do you think are the most significant to address in order to engage girls in sports?

*****FOR Girl Development Expert interviews:** What helps girls remain persistent in the face of challenges/barriers they face due to gender stereotypes and socialization.

*****FOR Former Athlete Interviews:** Are today's challenges similar to the challenges that you experienced throughout your sport career? Are their improvements? New barriers?

3. Based on your experiences, how do specific program policies impact girls' participation and retention? In other words, how do policies and practices of programs help address these barriers we discussed, or perhaps contribute to them?



Girls in the Game

Prompt: Can you think of examples of programs that are successful in addressing barriers? If so, what makes those programs successful?

PROMPT: Does it matter if it is co-ed or single-sex environment?

*****FOR program directors/ program coordinators:** What policies have you found most successful in addressing barriers? **PROBE:** why do you think those policies have been successful? What policies have not been successful in addressing girls' participation and retention? (Probe: Why?)

Section 2: Coaching [Time Allotted: 35-45 min]

In the next set of questions, we are hoping to learn more about how specific or generalized coaching practices can help address some of the barriers we discussed previously. Again, we are really interested in learning from you about coaching practices and strategies that engage girls in sports.

- Based on the barriers you identified in our discussion [in the interview add in the barriers the participant identified in question 1], what coaching methods/practices do you think are effective at addressing these barriers?

There are several demographic factors that can also present additional barriers that coaches may need to consider/address to engage girls in sports. In what ways, based on your experience, do factors such as race, socio-economic status, age, and so on, impact coaching practices?

Prompt: We know that these demographic factors intersect with gender in important ways. How does this intersectionality influence what coaching practices would be effective for girls?

- In what ways can coaches dispel gender-based stereotypes and beliefs that often impede participation?

Prompt: Have you experienced coaches treating girls and boys differently? If yes, how?

- What types of coaching styles do you think are most effective for engaging girls.

Prompt: What types of coaching styles can contribute to enjoyment? A sense of confidence, sense of competence/ efficacy amongst girls?

Prompt: What types of motivational strategies can coaches employ to help girls discover their athletic potential?

Prompt: Does the gender of the coach matter?

Prompt: Do girls need female role models? What do women coaches bring to the table?

- Are there particular communication styles/ approaches that are most effective in building girls' sports?

Section 3: Conclusions [Time allotted: 10-15 minutes]

We are nearing the end of the interview and are curious to know if there's anything you'd like to add. Specifically...

- Are there any questions we didn't ask, that you thought we would? Anything you'd like to add? Anything we did not discuss that you think would be helpful.
- Do you have any resources, information, that you think will be helpful for this project or other individuals we should talk to.

Appendix II: Survey of Girls and Their Parents

Parents' Survey

Thank you for your interest in this survey. We are talking to people across the country and are interested in your thoughts and opinions. Before we begin, we have a few questions to see if you qualify.

Are you male or female?

1. Male
2. Female

In what year were you born?

What is your age?

Are you of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino descent?

1. No, I am not
2. Yes

Please check one or more categories below to indicate which race(s) you consider yourself to be.

1. White
2. Black or African American
3. American Indian or Alaska Native
4. Asian/Pacific Islander
5. Two or more races or other

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Did not graduate from high school
2. High school graduate
3. Some college, but no degree (yet)
4. 2-year college degree
5. 4-year college degree
6. Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.)

What is your marital status?

1. Married, living with spouse
2. Separated
3. Divorced
4. Widowed
5. Single, never married
6. Domestic partnership

What is your State of Residence?

What is your zip code?

How would you describe the place where you live?

1. City
2. Suburb
3. Town
4. Rural area
5. Other, Please Specify

In which census region do you live?

1. Northeast
2. Midwest
3. South
4. West

Thinking back over the last year, what was your family's annual income?

1. Less than \$10,000
2. \$10,000 - \$19,999
3. \$20,000 - \$29,999
4. \$30,000 - \$39,999
5. \$40,000 - \$49,999
6. \$50,000 - \$59,999
7. \$60,000 - \$69,999
8. \$70,000 - \$79,999
9. \$80,000 - \$99,999
10. \$100,000 - \$119,999
11. \$120,000 - \$149,999
12. \$150,000 or more
13. \$150,000 - \$199,999
14. \$200,000 - \$249,999
15. \$250,000 - \$349,999
16. \$350,000 - \$499,999
17. \$500,000 or more
18. Prefer not to say

Are you the parent or guardian of any children under the age of 18?

1. Yes (How many children?)
2. No

If Yes:

- Child's First name
- Child Gender (Male, Female)
- Child age

S1. Which activities have the children listed below participated in during the past year?

1. Music lessons
2. Acting/singing/performance lessons
3. Girl/Boy Scouts
4. Community service activities
5. Religious education
6. After-school academic tutoring/enrichment
7. Art/drawing lessons
8. School clubs
9. Informal "pick-up" sports/athletic activities
10. Sports/athletic activities
11. None of these

S2a. For any of the sports or athletic activities that [this child participates /these children participate] in, do they have a coach or instructor?

1. Yes, participates in a sport/athletic activity with a coach or instructor
2. No, does not participate in a sport/athletic activity with a coach or instructor

S2. Which of the following organized activities have each of the children listed below participated in over the course of the past year? For this question, please think only of organized activities, where an adult coach or instructor leads the activity. Please do not think about any activities like PE or gym class. Select all that apply for each child listed below.

1. Archery
2. Baseball/Softball
3. Basketball
4. Cheerleading
5. Crew
6. Dance
7. Equestrian

8. Field hockey
9. Football
10. Golf
11. Gymnastics
12. Ice Hockey
13. Ice Skating
14. Lacrosse
15. Martial arts (karate, taekwondo, etc.)
16. Rugby
17. Soccer
18. Swimming/diving
19. Tennis
20. Track/cross country
21. Weightlifting
22. Wrestling
23. Volleyball
24. Other /What other sport activity does [NAME] participate in?

Parent Section 1: Sports Background

Thank you for answering some questions about you and your child. For this survey, we'd like to hear from both you and your child. Both your participation and your child's participation are extremely important to the success of this project.

In appreciation for you and your child's participation, you will receive X points upon completion. If you have more than one child in the qualifying age range, we will randomly select a child to participate. Only this child should participate in the children's section and they do not need to be available immediately upon completion of your section of the survey. The combined survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

For the remainder of this survey, we'd like you to answer thinking about your [AGE] year old daughter [NAME], unless otherwise specified.

First, to help us compare our survey respondents to the U.S. population, is [NAME] of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino descent?

1. No, she is not
2. Yes

And, please check one or more categories below to indicate which race(s) you consider [NAME] to be.

1. White
2. Black or African American
3. American Indian or Alaska Native
4. Asian/Pacific Islander
5. Two or more races or other

P1. How long has [NAME] played or participated in each activity listed below? Again, please think of only organized activities with an adult coach or instructor supervising. Please select one response in each column.

1. Less than 3 months
2. 3-6 months
3. 6-12 months
4. 1-2 years
5. 3-4 years
6. 5 years or more

P2a. How important is it to you that [NAME] plays sports?

1. Extremely Important
2. Very Important
3. Somewhat Important
4. Not Very Important
5. Not Important at all

P2b. How important is it to [NAME] that she plays sports?

1. Extremely Important
2. Very Important
3. Somewhat Important
4. Not Very Important
5. Not Important at all

P3. What are the top five most important benefits that you want [NAME] to get from playing sports?

I want [NAME] to...

1. Be physically fit/healthy
2. Learn sport-specific skills (i.e., throwing, catching, hitting a ball, etc.)
3. Develop life-skills (i.e. persistence, work ethic, etc.)
4. Have a sense of belonging and/or a way to make friends
5. Experience a competitive environment
6. Become more confident

7. Have the ability to play at a higher level in the future
8. Have fun
9. Have time away from screens (tablets, phones, TVs, etc.)
10. Develop leadership skills
11. Build connections to the community and/or the school
12. Have positive relationships with adults
13. Have the opportunity to earn a college scholarship/help her get into college

P4. How would you compare [NAME]'s ability to that of her teammates for each of the sports she participates in? Select one response in each column.

1. One of the most skilled
2. About the same as most
3. One of the least skilled

Parent Section 2: Specific Sport and Coaching Focus

Now, we'd like you to focus only on one sport that [NAME] plays: [SPORT FROM S2]

P5. Which of the following best describes the team that [NAME] is [SPORT_SELECTED] on?

1. Local recreational/house team
2. Local travel team
3. Higher level travel team (e.g., AAU, premier/elite teams or regional teams)
4. School team



XS Tennis and Education Foundation

P6. Please indicate how much [SPORT_SELECTED] has contributed to [NAME] to achieving each of the items listed below.

COLUMNS

1. A great deal
2. A good amount
3. Not very much
4. Not at all

ROWS

1. Being physically fit/healthy
2. Learning sport-specific skills (i.e., throwing, catching, hitting a ball, etc.)
3. Developing life-skills (i.e. persistence, work ethic, etc.)
4. Having a sense of belonging and/or a way to make friends
5. Experiencing a competitive environment
6. Becoming more confident
7. Having the ability to play at a higher level in the future
8. Having fun
9. Having time away from screens (tablets, phones, TVs, etc.)
10. Developing leadership skills
11. Building connections to the community and/or the school
12. Having positive relationships with adults
13. Having the opportunity to earn a college scholarship/ helping her get into college

P7a. Now we'd like to talk about the ways in which you might participate in [NAME] [SPORT_SELECTED]. Which of the following do you do?

1. Attend games/competitions
2. Attend practices
3. Drive her to games/practices
4. Coach or instruct the team (in an official capacity)
5. Practice with her outside of team practices
6. Sponsor the team
7. Provide food for events
8. Sign up to be a "Team Parent"
9. Take her to watch women's sporting events
10. Encourage her to follow women's sports figures in the media

11. Buy her books about women playing sports/written by female athletes
12. Buy equipment/extra gear
13. Pay for multiple opportunities to play throughout the year
14. None of these

P7b. And how often do you do each of the activities listed below, during the time or season when [NAME] is [SPORT_SELECTED]?

COLUMNS

1. 3 or more times per week
2. Twice a week
3. Once a week
4. Several times a month
5. Once a month
6. Less often than monthly

ROWS

1. Attend games/competitions
2. Attend practices
3. Drive her to games/practices
4. Coach the team (in an official capacity)
5. Practice with her outside of team practices
6. Sponsor the team
7. Provide food for events

P8. Now we'd like to talk about [NAME]'s [SPORT] coach. If [NAME] has multiple coaches for [SPORT], please think about the head coach.

Please note: We use the word "coach" when referring to either a coach or an instructor. So if you think of the adult in charge of your daughter's sport or activity as an instructor, please answer thinking of that person, even if the question asks about a "coach."

Overall, how good of a coach do you think [NAME]'s [SPORT] coach is?

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

P9. Thinking about everything that [NAME]'s [SPORT FROM S2] coach does well, what is the one thing they do that you value the most?

P10. Thinking about the things that [NAME]'s [SPORT FROM S2] coach doesn't do as well, what is the one thing they do that you wish they would do differently?

P11 Thinking about [NAME]'s [SPORT FROM S2] coach, how much does each statement below describe them? Again, if [NAME] has multiple coaches for [SPORT FROM S2], please think about the head coach.

COLUMNS

1. Describes Extremely Well
2. Describes Very Well
3. Describes Somewhat
4. Does not describe at all

ROWS

1. Respects players' opinions
2. Listens to the concerns and ideas of players
3. Really understands how players feel about things
4. Does not let kids make fun of other team members
5. Encourages kids to help other team members
6. Is someone you can count on
7. Is nice and friendly
8. Is encouraging
9. Treats players with respect
10. Is easy to talk to
11. Gives clear, consistent instructions
12. Encourages learning from mistakes while staying positive
13. Is a positive role model
14. Needs more training on how to coach
15. Can be too hard on the team
16. Encourages team members to have fun
17. Promotes healthy competition
18. Provides constructive criticism in a manner that doesn't hurt feelings
19. Promotes integrity and honesty
20. Communicates well with parents
21. Cares about the well-being of team members
22. Explains the reasoning behind skills and drills
23. Encourages safety

24. Helps my daughter develop as a player/athlete
25. Encourages physical fitness over weight or appearance
26. Rewards effort over outcome (trying a new skill over winning)
27. Is knowledgeable about [SPORT FROM S2]
28. Talks to players about life outside of sports
29. Is good with kids [NAME]'s age
30. Is someone who looks like me
31. Does a good job of coaching players of all skill levels
32. Please select "Describes somewhat" for this row

P12 How does [NAME]'s [SPORT FROM S2] coach determine playing time? Please select all the factors that you think influence their decision.

1. Skill
2. Effort
3. Experience level or seniority
4. Who a child's parents are
5. The coach distributes playing time evenly/equally among team members

P13. Do you think [NAME]'s [SPORT FROM S2] coach is...

1. More focused on winning games
2. More focused on team members having fun and/or developing their skills
3. Or equally focused on both

Parent Section 3: Parent Behavior

P14. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement below.

COLUMNS

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

ROWS

1. Girls' sports teams should have female coaches
2. Girls and boys require different coaching approaches
3. Coaches should make having fun more of a priority
4. Sports are equally important for girls and boys
5. Participating in sports promotes leadership and teamwork skills that students may not necessarily be exposed to in the classroom
6. Participating in sport can get in the way of academics
7. Playing sports has become too expensive
8. Playing sports has become too time-consuming
9. Please select "Agree" for this row

P15. What impact does participation in [SPORT FROM S2] have on [NAME's] academic performance? Would you say it has ...?

1. A very positive impact
2. A positive impact
3. No impact
4. A negative impact
5. A very negative impact

P17. Please select all statements that apply for you, personally.

1. I played sports as child
2. I played sports in high school
3. I played intramural sports in college
4. I played competitive sports in college
5. I have played or currently play in an adult recreational league
6. None of these

P18. Have you ever been an assistant or head coach for any girls' sports teams?

1. Yes, I have coached my daughter(s)' team(s)
2. Yes, I have coached a girls' sports team that my daughter was not on
3. No, I have not coached any girls' sports teams

P19. Do you have any other thoughts on girls' sports or coaching in girls' sports that you would like to share? Please enter them below.

The remainder of the questions are for [NAME].

Do you consent to your child participating in a survey regarding sports?

1. Yes
2. No (I understand selecting this option will end the survey)

We ask that you remain with your child for the duration of the survey. [IF CHILD_AGE=7-9: Please feel free to help your child read any of the questions they need help with, but it is important that your child's responses be entered as she sees fit.]

Is [NAME] currently available to take the survey?

1. Yes
2. No, but available at a later time

Girls' Survey

Kids' Section 1: Sports Background

Thank you for answering some questions for us today. We want you to know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions we will ask you, and that no one will be linking your answers to who you are. We are interested in the different opinions of [kids/people] your age, so please give us honest answers!

K1. Your parent has told us a little bit about some of the things you like to do. From the list below, what are your top 5 favorite things to do? You can drag and drop them in order, with #1 being your favorite thing to do.

1. Music lessons
2. Acting/singing/performance lessons
3. Girl/Boy Scouts
4. Community service activities
5. Religious education
6. After-school academic tutoring/enrichment
7. Art/drawing lessons
8. School clubs
9. Informal "pick-up" sports/athletic activities
10. Organized sports/athletic activities
11. Read
12. Hang out with my friends
13. Watch TV/Movies/Stream videos
14. Play video/computer games
15. Spend time online (browsing, on social media, etc.)
16. Play outside

K2. We'd like to talk some more about playing or participating in sports.

How important is it to you that you play sports?

1. Extremely Important
2. Very Important
3. Somewhat Important
4. Not Very Important
5. Not Important at all

K3 And, how important is it to your parents that you play sports?

1. Extremely Important
2. Very Important
3. Somewhat Important
4. Not Very Important
5. Not Important at all

K4. Do you have goals related to playing sports? (This could be something like learning a new skill this season, or playing in the pros!)

1. Yes
2. No

K5. What are those goals?

K6. What are some of the things, if any, that you like about playing sports?

1. It is a way to get exercise/be physically fit (F)
2. Competing against other teams/individuals (C) (con)
3. Friendly competition with my teammates (C) (soc)
4. Feeling part of a team (S) (soc)
5. Gives me confidence (int)
6. Opens doors to play in high school or college
7. It is a way to make friends/spend time with friends (S) (soc)
8. It is something to do that isn't screen time
9. Winning (C) (con)
10. Running around/being active (F)
11. I'm good at the sports I play (int)
12. Cheering on the other members of my team (S) (soc)
13. Being cheered on by others (S) (ext)
14. Non practice/game activities (pre-game dinners, awards ceremonies, etc.) (S) (soc)
15. It helps me lose or maintain weight (A)

16. Being physically strong (F) (int)
17. I want to gain new skills/improve existing skills (C) (int)
18. I have a good coach (ext)
19. Wearing the uniform and having team swag (sweatshirts, water bottles, backpacks, etc) (ext)
20. None of these

Team Note on Fun Mapping:

F=Fitness

C=Competition

S=Social

A=Appearance

Mapping to fun integration theory fun maps as follows:

Con = Contextual

In =Internal

Soc= Social

Ext =External

K7. Please say whether you agree a lot, agree a little, disagree a little, or disagree a lot with each of the following statements.

COLUMNS

1. Agree a lot
2. Agree a little
3. Disagree a little
4. Disagree a lot

ROWS

1. Sports are equally important for girls and boys
2. I don't like to try new moves/skills/plays because I am afraid of not being able to do them
3. I play sports because I want to lose weight or look better
4. Playing sports is one way I set goals for myself (like running faster, scoring a record number of points, etc.)
5. Being with my friends is one of my favorite things about playing sports
6. Participating in sport can get in the way of academics
7. Sometimes boys make fun of us or make us feel uncomfortable while we practice
8. I am self-conscious about playing sports because I don't like the uniforms or getting sweaty

Kids' Section 2: Specific Sport And Coaching

K8. For this next section, we'd like you to think only about [SPORT FROM S2] and your most recent season.

Is your team girls only, or a mix of girls and boys?

1. Girls only
2. Both boys and girls

K8a. Is your team...?

1. Mostly girls
2. An equal amount of boys and girls
3. Mostly boys

K9. How much do you like [SPORT_SELECTED]? Note: to regress against coach liking

1. Love it
2. Like it a lot
3. Like it a little
4. Don't like it at all

K10. Do you think you will keep [SPORT_SELECTED] as you get older? Please select one answer for each activity.

1. I won't play after this season is over
2. I will probably play for another season or two
3. I want to play in high school
4. I want to play in college or professionally

K11. Which of these are things you worry about when it comes to [SPORT_SELECTED]? Select all that apply.

1. Not playing well
2. Letting others down
3. Messing up during a game or competition
4. Not being as good as my teammates
5. Being better than my teammates
6. Losing
7. None of these

K12. Now we have some questions about your [SPORT FROM S2] coach(es). If you have more than one [SPORT FROM S2] coach, please answer thinking about the person who is the head coach. Are they...

1. A man
2. A woman

K13. In addition to the head coach, are there any assistant coaches? (If you have more than one assistant coach you can pick more than one answer)

1. Yes, a man (or men)
2. Yes, a woman (or women)
3. No, I just have one [sport] coach

K14. For the next few questions, please think only about your [SPORT FROM S2] coach.

How much do you like your coach? Note: to regress against sport liking

1. Really, really like them a lot
2. Really like them a lot
3. Like them a lot
4. Like them a little
5. Don't like them at all

K15. Thinking about everything that your coach is good at, what do you like the most about them as a coach?

K16. Thinking about everything that your coach is good at, what do you like the least about them as a coach?

K17 Thinking about your coach, how much does each statement below describe them?

COLUMNS

1. Describes Extremely Well
2. Describes Very Well
3. Describes Somewhat
4. Does not describe at all

ROWS

1. Listens to our concerns and ideas
2. Really understands how we feel about things
3. Does not let us make fun of others
4. Encourages us to help other team members
5. Is someone I can count on
6. Is nice and friendly
7. Is encouraging
8. Treats us with respect
9. Is easy to talk to
10. Gives clear, consistent instructions
11. Encourages learning from mistakes while staying positive
12. Is a positive role model
13. Can be too hard on us

14. Encourages us to have fun
15. Promotes healthy competition
16. Promotes integrity and honesty
17. Cares about the well-being of team members
18. Explains the reasoning behind skills and drills
19. Encourages safety
20. Helps me develop as a player
21. Rewards effort over outcome (trying a new skill over winning)
22. Knows a lot about [SPORT]
23. Talks to me about life outside of sports
24. Is someone who looks like me
25. Does a good job of coaching players of all skill levels

K18. Do you think your coach is...?

1. More focused on winning games
2. More focused on team members having fun and/or developing their skills
3. Or equally focused on both

K20. Does your coach ever talk about setting goals? Here we are talking about things you might want to achieve or learn – not necessarily scoring goals! These could be things like no turnovers in a game, making new personal bests, or various other things, depending on the sport.

1. Yes, we have team goals that we set
2. Yes, we have individual goals that we set
3. No, we don't talk about goals
4. I'm not sure

K21. Please say whether you agree a lot, agree a little, disagree a little, or disagree a lot with each of the following statements.

COLUMNS

1. Agree a lot
2. Agree a little
3. Disagree a little
4. Disagree a lot

ROWS

1. I feel like I can talk to my [SPORT FROM S2] coach about anything
2. My parent(s) respect my [SPORT FROM S2] coach
3. I look up to my [SPORT FROM S2] coach

Kids' Section 3: Wrap Up

K22. We have just a few more quick questions for you.

Thinking about all the sports you play, how good do you think you are compared to the others you play with?

1. Better than most others
2. About the same as most others
3. Not as good as most others

K23. Please share with us any other thoughts on sports or coaching that you want to tell us. Please type them below.

K24. Did an adult sit with you or help you with this survey?

1. Yes
2. No

K25. Please pick the one statement that best describes how involved an adult was while you were participating in this survey.

1. An adult helped me understand a lot of the questions and answers
2. An adult helped me understand some of the questions and answers
3. An adult helped me read the survey but did not help me understand anything
4. An adult was with me but did not help me read anything or help in any way

K26. Please pick the one statement that best describes how involved an adult was while you were participating in this survey.

1. An adult helped me pick a lot of answers
2. An adult helped me pick some answers
3. An adult did not help me pick any answers

Appendix III: Exemplary Programs

Survey of Exemplary Programs

This survey is intended for organizational leaders and program staff who oversee or manage coaches of girls sports programs. The purpose of the survey is to provide feedback that can help improve coaching practices for girls. Please note: this is not a program evaluation; rather we are interested in learning more about effective, “gold standard” practices that can be shared with others so that all girls benefit from positive coaching experiences.

1. **Where is your organization located?**
 - Urban setting
 - Suburban setting
 - Rural setting
 - Other (please specify)
2. **What title best describes your role in the organization? (please select one)**
 - Executive Director
 - Program Director/Leader
 - Program Coordinator/Manager
 - Coach
 - Other (please specify)
3. **How many years have you worked with girls in a “sports setting”?**
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-3 years
 - 4-6 Years
 - More than 6 years
4. **What are the primary sports offered for girls in your program(s)? (please check all that apply)**
 - archery
 - baseball/softball
 - basketball
 - cheerleading
 - crew/rowing
 - dance
 - equestrian
 - field hockey
 - football
 - golf
 - gymnastics
 - ice hockey
 - ice skating
 - lacrosse
 - martial arts (karate, taekwondo)
 - rugby
 - soccer
 - swimming/diving
 - tennis
 - track/cross country
 - weightlifting
 - wrestling
 - volleyball
 - Other (please specify)
5. **How many girls does your sports programming serve?**
 - Less than 50
 - 51-100
 - 101-200
 - More than 200
6. **What is the general age range of the girls that participate in your program(s)? (check all that apply)**
 - Less than 7 years old
 - 7-10 years old
 - 11-13 years old
 - older than 13 years
7. **Does your program have any specific policies or practices aimed at increasing girls’ participation and retention in your sports program?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please describe here

8. **Do your coaches use specific strategies to support girls' interest and engagement in your sports program?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please describe here
9. **Do your coaches use specific strategies to build girls' confidence and skills in sport?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please describe here
10. **Please place a check mark next to any/all of the policies or practices that exist in your program(s)**
 - Training for coaches when they first join the program
 - Training for coaches on at least a yearly basis
 - Regular evaluation of program(s) from someone outside the organization
 - Regular evaluation of program(s) from someone inside the organization
 - Parent education (i.e., meeting, parent brochure, other)
 - Peer leadership (i.e., peer mentoring, volunteer opportunities, other)
 - Girls involved in decision-making
 - Safe sport policy
 - None of the above
11. **Please place a check mark next to any/all of the policies or practices that exist in your program(s)**
 - Provide transportation to the program
 - Provide scholarships to cover the cost of the program
 - Hire program staff who reflect the racial/ethnic make-up of the girls
 - Include women on the program staff
 - Include women on the coaching staff
 - Provide opportunities for girls to watch girls' or women's sports events
 - Build relationships with parents or provide opportunities for parents to get involved in the program
 - Identify role models that resonate with the girls (that are like them in some way)
 - Have policies to ensure "fairness" (in terms of access, decision making, playing time) for all enrolled youth
 - None of the above
12. **Please rank these items from "most important" to "not at all important" to best describe your coaches' goals with girls**
 - Focused on winning games
 - Focused on developing girls' skills
 - Focused on supporting the development of girls holistically beyond sports (i.e., emotional and mental health, life skills)
 - Focused on making sure girls are having fun
 - Focused on getting to know the girls as people, not just athletes
 - Focused on developing positive body image
 - Focused on developing strong team cohesion and morale
 - Focused on fostering close friendships among team players
 - Focused on communicating with parents and getting them involved
 - Focused on calling out the girls' mistakes
 - Focused on providing girls with praise
 - Focused on giving girls opportunities to ask questions or provide input
 - Focused on helping girls set personal and team-based goals
 - Focused on developing trusting relationships with girls
 - Focused on creating a safe space for girls
13. **What are some of the challenges your coaches have experienced coaching girls (i.e., with resources, girls, parents, other)?**
14. **What are some of the successes your coaches have experienced coaching girls?**
15. **What coaching tools would you like to see developed/ have available to help strengthen your program(s) for girls?**
16. **Is there anything else you would like to add about coaching girls that would help us develop best practices for coaching?**
17. **Optional: If you would like to share your contact information for further conversation, please provide the following. The responses to this survey will not be publicly linked with your contact information.**

List of Exemplary Programs

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
Fort Smith Express Soccer Association	Fort Smith	AR	Growing Great Girls	75	Soccer
PHIT Foundation, Inc.	West Helena	AR	Dance For Your LYFE (Leading Youth Fitness Education)	100	Dance
St. Bernards Development Foundation and St. Bernards Health and Wellness	Jonesboro	AR	GoGirlGo! Play-Pilot-Persist	250	General Fitness
North Country HealthCare DBA Girls on the Run of Northern	Flagstaff	AZ	Girls on the Run of Northern Arizona Heart & Sole	45	Running
Girls Athletic Leadership School Los Angeles	Arleta	CA	GALYMPICS	192	Running
Oakland Lacrosse Club	Oakland	CA	Oakland Lacrosse Club (OLC) Girls' Outreach and Team Program	84	Lacrosse
Woodcraft Rangers	Los Angeles	CA	Woodcraft Rangers after-school Sport Program for Girls	900	Soccer
Girls Leading Girls	San Francisco	CA	Free Girls Leadership and Soccer After School Program in Oakland, CA	60	Soccer
Netball America	Westminster	CA	"Ready Set Net Atlanta! AND Be an Inspiration Los Angeles"	650	Netball
Sf seals soccer 2005 Girls team	San Francisco	CA	San Francisco Seals Soccer Club 2005 Girls team	90	Soccer
L.A.C.E.R. Afterschool Programs	Los Angeles	CA	SportStars	1200	Dance
Natasha Watley Foundation	Woodland Hills	CA	Coach Mentor Curriculum	730	Softball
Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative (BAWSI)	San Jose	CA	BAWSI Girls	235	Soccer
City Lacrosse (currently Harlem Lacrosse - Los Angeles)	Santa Monica	CA	Harlem Lacrosse - Los Angeles	110	Lacrosse
The SCGA Foundation	Studio City	CA	SCGA Junior High School Girls' Program	48	Golf
Sacred Heart Nativity Schools	San Jose	CA	Sacred Heart Nativity School Girls' Softball Program	30	Softball
Woodrow Wilson High School	Los Angeles	CA	Wilson Girls Soccer Program	50	Soccer
Girls on the Run of the Bay Area	San Francisco	CA	Girls on the Run's Heart & Sole: Developmental Running Program for African-American & Hispanic Girls	60	Running

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
Environmental Charter School	Gardena	CA	"You Go Girl, Ramp it Up!" Environmental Charter Middle School/RAMP Tennis	20	Tennis
Project 2020 Inc.	Palo Alto	CA	Project 2020 Girls Water Polo Program	30	Water Polo
Heart of Los Angeles	Los Angeles	CA	Central City Girls Basketball Association (CCGBA)	140	Basketball
Girls Incorporated of Alameda County	Oakland	CA	All STARS Sports	75	Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball
COVA- Conservatory	San Francisco	CA	COVA Golf Class/ Sports Program	60	Golf
Redwood City Police Activities League	Redwood City	CA	PAL Play Like a Girl Sports Camps	100	Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball
Boys & Girls Clubs of Pueblo County	Pueblo	CO	Girls Rock – Dropout Prevention through Sports	30	Volleyball
The Cycle Effect	Eagle	CO	The Cycle Effect: Girls Mountain Bike Program	125	Cycling
Pequeñas Ligas Hispanas de New Haven, Inc.	New Haven	CT	Girls College-Bound Volleyball and Multi-Sport Program	100	Volleyball
Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury, Inc.	Waterbury	CT	Hoops & Laces	100	Basketball
Norwalk Grassroots Tennis & Education	Norwalk	CT	Girls Club U12, U14, U16	20	Tennis
The Washington Inner City Lacrosse Foundation	Washington	DC	WINNERS Lacrosse Fall Ball League	150	Lacrosse
Friends of Fort Dupont Ice Arena	Washington	DC	Kids On Ice® Synchronized Skating	54	Figure Skating
DC Scores	Washington	DC	DC SCORES Alumnae Team	30	Soccer
Girls Incorporated of the Washington DC Metropolitan Area	Washington	DC	Girls Inc DC HOOPS for Girls Program	70	Basketball
Beacon House	Washington	DC	Beacon House Falcons Competitive Cheer	85	Cheer-leading
Girls Place Inc.	Gainesville	FL	Girls Place Athletics Program	130	Volleyball
PACE Center for Girls, Lee County	Ft. Meyers	FL	PACE Center for Girls, Lee County	25	Tennis, Basketball, Volleyball
The Skills Center	Tampa	FL	Girls in Sports	60	Basketball
Lakewood High School Girls Basketball Program	St. Petersburg	FL	Lakewood High School Girls Basketball Program	30	Basketball

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
Florida Department of Health in Seminole County	Sanford	FL	Glam Girls Running Club	60	Running With Cross-Training/Conditioning
Coastal Outreach Soccer	Brunswick	GA	Coastal Outreach Soccer Our Time	75	Soccer
DeKalb Aquatics Swim Team Inc	Decatur	GA	DeKalb Aquatics Swim Team Inc	75	Swimming
MACH Academy, Inc.	Martinez	GA	MACH Girls Rockets with Rackets and CODING	60	Tennis
Campbell Junior Basketball Inc.	Smyrna	GA	Campbell Junior Basketball Program	60	Basketball
Soccer in the Streets	Atlanta	GA	Soccer in the Streets	40	Soccer
Moving in the Spirit	Atlanta	GA	Stepping Stones at Kindezi	36	Dance
Atlanta Youth Tennis Foundation	Atlanta	GA	"Serving Aces"	100	Tennis
Sporty Girls Inc.	Atlanta	GA	Sporty Girls, Inc.'s Camp Elite	40	Golf, Soccer, Swimming, Tennis
Jackie Joyner- Kersee Foundation	East Saint Louis	IL	"Winning In Life For Girls "	160	Volleyball
XS Tennis and Education Foundation	Chicago	IL	XS Tennis Junior Academy Program	75	Tennis
Girls in the Game	Chicago	IL	Girls in the Game After School Program	1350	Basketball
Chicago Youth Boxing Club	Chicago	IL	The Lady Contenders Club	50	Wrestling
Lost Boyz Inc.	Chicago	IL	MVP Baseball Program	45	Softball
Rockford Park District Foundation	Rockford	IL	Gliding into the Future	200	Figure Skating
Gonzo Soccer, Inc.	Chicago	IL	Gonzo Soccer Leadership Academy for Girls (Gonzo Soccer)	120	Soccer
Directed Initiatives for Youth, Inc. DBA Excite All Stars	New Orleans	LA	Excite Girls Rock!	1509	Basketball
Shooting Touch, Inc.	Norwood	MA	Getting Girls in the Game (G3) Program	150	Basketball
Playworks Education Energized	Boston	MA	Playworks Developmental Sports Leagues	705	Basketball
Boston Showstoppers Girls Academic and Athletic Enrichment Program	Dorchester	MA	Boston Showstoppers: City To City – High School Division	60	Basketball

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
MetroLacrosse Inc	Mattapan	MA	MetroLacrosse Girls' Programming	400	Lacrosse
Soccer Without Borders	East Boston	MA	Soccer Without Borders Middle & High School Girls Program	90	Soccer
Beyond Soccer, Inc.	Lawrence	MA	Girls in Sports	200	Soccer
The BASE	Roxbury	MA	The BASE Girls Baseball and Softball	250	Baseball
Tenacity	Allston	MA	Girls Got Game	200	Tennis
NEW ENGLAND YOUTH TACKLE FOOTBALL Inc.	Lynn	MA	Spring / Summer Instructional Football	20	Football
Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center	Dorchester	MA	HEY Sister at Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center	100	Tennis
Merrimack Valley YMCA	Lawrence	MA	Smart Hoops – Girls' Summer Basketball Education Program	75	Basketball
Parks & People Foundation	Baltimore	MD	Baltimore Middle School Girls' Sports Program	600	Volleyball
STARLINGS	Baltimore	MD	Baltimore Starlings Volleyball Club	35	Volleyball
The Charm City Youth Lacrosse League	Baltimore	MD	The Charm City Youth Lacrosse League	200	Lacrosse
The First Tee Baltimore	Hunt Valley	MD	Grasp Girls With Golf	150	Golf
Detroit Community Schools	Detroit	MI	DCS Hurricanes Cheer Teams	45	Cheer-leading
Detroit PAL	Detroit	MI	PAL Girls Initiative	4275	Volleyball
Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation	Detroit	MI	Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation Detroit-Community Gymnastics Program	200	Gymnastics
Vista Maria	Dearborn Heights	MI	Vista Maria Team Sports Program	500	Swimming
Fairview Foundation	Minneapolis	MN	GIRLS Program	100	Basketball
#SomaliGirlsRock	St. Paul	MN	Higher Ground Academy #SomaliGirlsRock	150	Soccer
YMCA Mankato	Mankato	MN	YWCA Girls Programming	250	Running/ Movement
Education First, Athletics Second Coalition	Kansas City	MO	Ed First Lady Greyhound Player Development Academy	50	Basketball
Darden Enlightenment Center	Farmville	NC	Girls in Motion Athletic Program	75	Karate
Girls Incorporated of Omaha	Omaha	NE	Girls on the Move – Volleyball	24	Volleyball

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
MVP360 Leadership Development Programs, Inc.	Delran	NJ	MVP360 Girls Sports Division	180	Softball
Raritan Valley YMCA	East Brunswick	NJ	Stop the Gap with Tennis	12	Tennis
Shred Love	Bayonne	NJ	Shred Love Ladies First	20	Snow-boarding
Girls Youth Basketball	Henderson	NV	Girls Youth Basketball	600	Basketball
PowerPlay NYC	Brooklyn	NY	STARS Series After-School Program	100	Basketball
Play Rugby, Inc.	New York	NY	Play Rugby USA Borough Community Club	82	Rugby
Boys & Girls Club of Newburgh	Newburgh	NY	Lady Panthers Basketball	75	Basketball
Inspirational Triathlon Racing International (i-tri)	East Hampton	NY	i-tri: Expansion to two additional school districts	180	Triathlon
South Bronx United	Bronx	NY	SBU Community Schools Soccer Program for Girls	80	Soccer
Row New York	New York	NY	“Row New York’s School Day Adaptive Rowing Program Row New York in Canarsie, Brooklyn Program”	148	Rowing
Street Soccer USA	New York	NY	Street Soccer USA – SF Ladies First Program	241	Soccer
Dancing Dreams	Bayside	NY	Dancing Dreams	285	Dance
Extreme Kids and Crew	Brooklyn	NY	Extreme Girls	50	Dance
Urban Sports Group	Bronx	NY	City Divas Softball Program	250	Softball
Bridge the Gap Youth Inc.	Brooklyn	NY	BTG Athletics Youth Leagues	300	Basketball
Ballin Out Loud, Inc.	Brooklyn	NY	Ballin Out Loud bridging the gap	500	Basketball
Figure Skating in Harlem, Inc.	New York	NY	Figure Skating in Harlem ICE: I Can Excel Afterschool Program and Summer Dreams Camp	120	Figure Skating
Children’s Aid Society	Bronx	NY	ELT - Children’s Aid Society – CS219	30	Basketball
Harlem Lacrosse - New York	New York	NY	Harlem Lacrosse Girls’ Programs	284	Lacrosse
Algonquin Sports for Kids, Inc.	Buffalo	NY	Soccer and Golf at Charter School For Applied Technology	30	Soccer
America SCORES New York	New York	NY	Middle School Girls’ Soccer and Literacy in Action	117	Soccer
Greenwich Village Youth Council	New York	NY	The West 4th St. Girls’ Basketball League	120	Basketball

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
Dance Theatre of Harlem Inc.	New York	NY	Dance Theatre of Harlem School	50	Classical Ballet
America SCORES Cleveland	Cleveland	OH	Soccer and Literacy Youth Development Program	416	Soccer
Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation	Oklahoma City	OK	Youth Rowing League	130	Rowing
Portland Tennis & Education	Portland	OR	Todos Tennis – Intergenerational Women’s Tennis	38	Tennis
Girls on the Run Philadelphia	Philadelphia	PA	Expansion of Heart & Sole to 4 Scholarship Sites for Two Seasons	96	Running
Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation	Philadelphia	PA	Snider Hockey Girls Program	347	Ice Hockey
Beat the Streets Wrestling Program Philadelphia	Philadelphia	PA	Beat the Streets Philadelphia Girls’ Wrestling	82	Wrestling
Starfinder Foundation	Philadelphia	PA	Senior Leader Girls: A Soccer Leadership Program for Teen Girls	50	Soccer
Down the Line and Beyond	Philadelphia	PA	DTLB Summer Tennis Camp at Poplar Park and Bodine Girls High School	100	Tennis
Olivet Boys & Girls Club	Reading	PA	Olivet Boys & Girls Club Inner-City Softball League	100	Softball
Team Up Philly	Narberth	PA	Team Up Philly Girls’ After-school Sports & Mentoring Program at Olney Elementary	40	Basketball
Lancaster Tennis Patrons, Association, Inc.	Lancaster	PA	Tennis Central	200	Tennis
International Student Athlete Academy, Inc.	Philadelphia	PA	ISAA Girls’ Developmental Basketball Academy	150	Basketball
Youth Enrichment Services, Inc.	Pittsburgh	PA	Sister Circle-IMAGE for Life	75	Basketball
Philly Girls in Motion, Inc.	Havertown	PA	PGiM/Drexel University Philly Girls Got Game	120	Lacrosse
St. George Youth Sports League	St. George	SC	Adventure Girlz Summer Camp	12	Water Sports: Surfing, Sailing, Standup Paddle Boarding
Memphis Inner City Rugby	Nashville	TN	Memphis Inner City Rugby	90	Rugby
Play Like a Girl!	Nashville	TN	Eat.Move.Play! Tennis Program	120	Tennis

Organization Name	City	State	Program Name	Estimated Number of Girls Being Served	Primary Sport
Dallas Tennis Association	Addison	TX	Irma Rangel After School Program for Tennis and Education	100	Tennis
Rae's Hope, Inc	Dallas	TX	Rae's Hope Volleyball Life Skills Program	200	Volleyball
BRIDGE Lacrosse	Dallas	TX	Panthers Growth	40	Lacrosse
YMCA of Greater San Antonio	San Antonio	TX	Girls Volleyball and Future Stars at the Davis-Scott and Westside YMCA	850	Volleyball
Sisterhood Agenda, Inc.	St. John	US VI	SHE: Sisters Healthy & Empowered	50	Water Sports
Utah Development Academy	Salt Lake City	UT	UDA Competition Program for girls	40	Soccer
TrailsforYouth.org	Springfield	VA	Girls Biking the Path to Empowerment	100	Cycling
Virginia Beach Threat	Virginia Beach	VA	Virginia Beach Threat Basketball Organization	15	Basketball
Chill Foundation	Burlington	VT	Chill Boston Girls Program	75	Skateboarding
Denny International Middle School	Seattle	WA	Wednesday Out of School Time Sports Conditioning and Skills Training for Girls	331	Volleyball
The Mountaineers	Seattle	WA	Climbing Opportunities for Hispanic and African-American Girls in Mountain Workshops	35	Other
Skate Like a Girl	Seattle	WA	Skate Like a Girl	210	Skateboarding
America SCORES Milwaukee	Milwaukee	WI	America SCORES Milwaukee	60	Soccer
Tamarack Waldorf School	Milwaukee	WI	Tamarack Waldorf School Girls' Sports Program	55	Basketball



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