

June 1, 2009

Youth Sport Policy Recommendations



Tucker Center for
Research on Girls &
Women in Sport

University of Minnesota

www.tuckercenter.org

612.626.6055

Females in Positions of Power in Youth Sport

Youth sport is an important social institution in the United States—millions of children play, and an equal number of adults volunteer and coach youth sports (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). Youth sport offers a rich, but often lost, opportunity for creating social change due to gender inequity. The scarcity of female coaches in the United States at the professional, amateur, intercollegiate, interscholastic and youth levels of sport is well documented.

In order for the potential of youth sport to be realized as a mechanism for creating social change and challenging stereotypical beliefs of children and their families pertaining to gender, power, and leadership, females must be seen *in equal numbers* in all positions of power within this important social institution. It appears that much work yet remains in order for gender equity in youth sport leadership to be achieved. The following policy recommendations will help guide youth sport organizations and stakeholders to achieve gender equity in positions of power in youth sport.

Policy Recommendations

- Commit to at minimum, that twenty-five percent of all Head Coaches and thirty percent of all Assistant Coaches in youth sport organizations should be female.
- Hold one all female coach training clinic each year, delivered by an all female coaching staff
- Individuals in charge of hiring coaches should ensure that both fathers and mothers are asked and invited to coach, or encouraged to apply for coaching positions
- Develop a mentorship program for novice female coaches
- Allow a co-coaching option for all Head Coach positions
- Include information about the importance of gender equity in positions of power in all organizational communication
- Mandate coach education for all coaches, paid and volunteers