Women in College Coaching Report Card

HOW THE REPORT CARD IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Data in the *Women in College Coaching Report Card* (WCCRC) can be used by institutions, athletics administrators, conference commissioners, and sport coaching associations to advocate for women coaches, track progress or decline in comparison to peer institutions, evaluate the effectiveness of strategies aimed at increasing the percentage of women coaches, and hold institutions and decision makers accountable in creating a gender-balanced workforce. It can also be used to start and continue discussion and educate and motivate decision makers to think differently about how they recruit, hire, and retain women coaches.

Over the last seven years, we have had numerous and ongoing discussions about this topic with a variety of stakeholders at every level of sport. We feel these discussions help shift the focus to decision makers and organizational change, and away from the continual blaming of women for the lack of women coaches (e.g., women don't apply, women lack experience, women aren't interested in coaching, women "opt out") which has dominated women in coaching narratives (LaVoi, 2016, see). How decision makers discuss the stagnation of women in coaching matters because the way something is framed influences how people process that information and what action is taken (or not) to address the issue. For example, based on recent data we found male athletic directors (ADs) attributed the lack of women coaches to women (e.g., lack of qualified female coaches, women aren't interested in coaching), while female ADs & senior women administrators attributed the phenomena to structural factors (success of the old boys' club, conscious/unconscious discrimination in the hiring process) (Kane & LaVoi, 2018). This study is an example of how Tucker Center scholars are using data to educate and challenge common blaming narratives, and the WCCRC is another such effort.

In discussions with colleagues across the US and around the globe, we have learned about ways in which our reports are being used for social change—ways we could have never anticipated at its inception. Athletic administrators at institutions with A and B WCCRC grades tell us that they showcase their grade as a "bragging right" to peers, colleagues, donors, trustees and college presidents. ADs also use it, along with institutional WeCOACH memberships, to recruit and retain the most talented women, as an above average WCCRC grade can be proof of a workplace climate that values inclusion and diversity and supports women. LaVoi and Wasend (2018) interviewed ADs with above average institutional grades (As and Bs), one indicator of a track record of recruiting, hiring and retaining women coaches. In short, these ADs valued women and explicitly tried to create a workplace culture

where women felt valued, supported, appreciated, and cared about "on and off the court." This report has become a playbook for athletics administrators.

Some caveats about WCCRC grades are warranted. First, the institutional grade is reflective of one piece of the workplace; an above-average grade may not accurately reflect or guarantee a positive or healthy workplace climate for women. Additionally, ADs new to an institution inherit a grade and it is neither fair nor productive to "blame" that person for a below average grade; conversely, some ADs inherit an above average grade. Similarly, some ADs are committed to hiring women, offer women the job but are turned down. With data, we can see over an AD's leadership tenure at an institution if the grade improves, is sustained, or if it declines. We have also tracked the hiring pattern and track record of ADs over time and across multiple institutions, which tells us if the AD is tangibly an ally and is committed to hiring women or not. The WCCRC data provides a visible mechanism of accountability.

Women coaches tell us they use WCCRC grades as one tool to help them assess workplace climate and goodness of fit when on the job market or making a career move. Conference commissioners are using the data to develop conference-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives, educate office staff, and offer women-focused professional development programming and networking. College coaching associations are using the data to assess how to improve the culture of their sport for women. National sport organizations and federations are using the data to assess and improve gender equity initiatives and to develop targeted programming to recruit and retain women coaches, and develop their own sport specific toolkits.

In short, sport leaders who care about gender equity in sport are utilizing the WCCRC data, and all the *Game On: Women Can Coach Toolkit* pieces to support their efforts.

RESOURCES:

- Kane, M. J., & LaVoi, N. M. (2018). An examination of athletic administrators' perceptions regarding the absence of female head coaches in women's intercollegiate sports. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity,* 1-33. https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2016-0031
- LaVoi, N. M. (2016) (Ed.) *Women in Sports Coaching.* London: Routledge.
- LaVoi, N. M., & Wasend, M. K. (2018, July). *Athletic administration best practices of recruitment, hiring and retention of female collegiate coaches.* Minneapolis, MN: Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport.
- Common Blame Women in Sport Coaching Narratives
- Shifting the Narrative about Women Sport Coaches
- Game On: Women Can Coach Toolkit