

Future Involvement in Coaching, Refereeing and Sport Administration of Greek Female Athletes

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Abstract

Theoretical Background

The representation of women in the field of coaching, refereeing and sport administration appears to be in low levels although the participation of women in sports has increased rapidly in the last decade. In the U.S.A. it is referred that during year 2004, only 17% of colleges had a female head-coach and 28% of them had assistant-coach positions awarded to women for men's teams (1). Research shows a variety of barriers that current females face in coaching such as: male dominance in sports field and lack of opportunity (2), the conflict of roles and time demands imposed by coaching, discrimination in hiring practices (3), and professional banning due to sex discrimination. Even though some reasons appear common for both sexes, women are more possible to abandon coaching due to lack of time, and they desire in a lower percentage the position of head coach because of demanding working load and wage differential in comparison to male coaches.

The primary purpose of this project was (a) to explore the future plans of Greek female athletes to become involved with coaching, refereeing, and sport administration and (b) to identify the barriers that the athletes perceive as constraints towards their involvement in coaching, refereeing, and sport administration.

Methodology

The sample consisted of 181 female athletes, of whom 38.7% (70) had previously participated in international level competitions (Olympic Games, World Championships or European Championships), 51.4% (93) had experience of national level competition, 2.8% (5) from regional competition and 7.2% from club level competition. Their ages ranged from 15 to 35 years of old (\bar{X} = 21.77, SD = 3.39). Data were collected with a written questionnaire that was developed based on existing studies.

Results

Among the athletes 113 (62,4%) want to be a coach in the future and 68 (37,6%) who did not have any such plans consider as three main barriers the following reasons: (a)

lack of interest 22%, (b) lack of respect 19,1% and (c) too little pay 18,8%. Fewer athletes 76 (42%) had plans of becoming a referee/judge in the future compared with becoming a coach and 104 (57,5%) athletes did not want to giving as main reasons: (a) lack of interest 42,5%, (b) lack of respect 25,6%, and (c) male dominance 29,81%. Finally, in relation with their future plans on following a career in sport administration, 106 (58,6%) athletes gave positive response and 75 (41,4%) negative. The main reasons for not planning to go into sport administration were: (a) the lack of interest 30,5%, (b) too much time 29,3% and (c) too much travel 28%. Discussion The female athletes' interest to become involved with coaching (62%) and sport administration (59%) appeared to be greater than their interest toward refereeing (42%). In all three sporting roles, lack of interest was reported as the major reason for not making any future plans, followed by lack of respect for women, low wages, the perception that it's a male dominated sector, and the bulk of time required for doing the job. The results provide information necessary for sporting bodies and agencies, regarding the policies that ought to be developed in Greece to increase the proportion of women involved at various levels of sports and sport-related roles.

Greek sport federations and sport clubs may increase the above mentioned participation percentages of female athletes in sport administration and coaching positions by developing a new incentives policy for female athletes and an educational and training program which would target to increase their interest in sport involvement. Restructuring and offering a new incentives policy and creating the education and training program of female athletes could be financed through the Community Support Framework program (2006-2013).

Another possibly effective measure would be the invitation of female athletes to serve as members in Advisory Bodies created by Sport Federations or promoting women to assume leadership positions in the Board of Directors of Sport Federations.

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