



WOMEN IN BOXING

- 17%** of boxers in training are women or girls
- 12%** of coaches are women
- 5%** of boxing's coach tutors are women
- 44%** of boxing administrators are women
- 26%** of boxing club committee members are women

IABA'S SPORT IRELAND WOMEN IN SPORT LEADERSHIP GRADUATES, NOW MENTORS, ARE SHARING TIPS, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE WHICH MAY HELP CLUBS WHO WISH TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND GIRLS TO PARTICIPATE, COMPETE, COACH, AND ADMINISTER OUR SPORT OF BOXING.

**Willingness
Participation
Progression
Facilities**

**Coaching
Menstruation
Visibility
Voice**



Willingness



The most important step any boxing club can take in being more inclusive of women and girls than they already are, is to be willing to be inclusive.

Historically, the women of boxing have fulfilled vital, invaluable sport administration roles, such as Club Secretary or Treasurer, or in supporting volunteer roles during club shows, tournaments, or fundraising events.

To bring more girls in to our sport, boxing clubs should include women in their coaching team, and on their training floors.

Participation

Participating in all sports, including boxing, is a goal in and of itself. Participation in our sport must be enjoyable, regardless of gender, to ensure retention. It is important that all coaches keep this in mind when coaching all non-competitive participants in boxing. Competition will always be at the heart of our sport, but we need to make sure members know that winning or losing is not what defines us as part of the boxing family. Prioritising competitive athletes in boxing is understandable, but it comes at the expense of valuing the contribution to every club of non-competitive members.



Progression

Women and girl boxers should be shown that winning medals and competitions in our sport is not the most important value of our coaching. Giving them an opportunity to be leaders and champions to younger athletes and making them feel valued in our clubs will help retention:

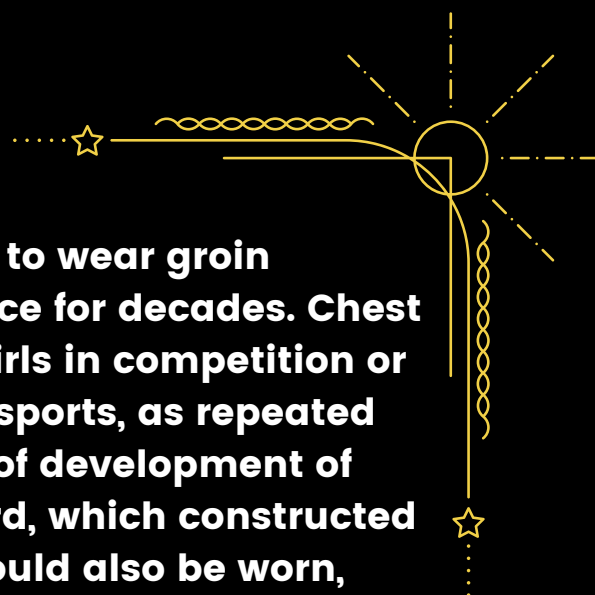
- Progression does not always have to be about winning.**
- There are many athletes that have never won titles but go on to become amazing coaches and officials.**
- Being part of a sport should feel like being part of an extended family. We should create an environment of inclusion in our clubs.**
- Making sure we introduce new members to all the coaches at induction and arranging a buddy system with existing members.**



Facilities

Many clubs do not have their own premises or may share common spaces such as toilets or changing facilities. Other clubs may have no access to toilets or changing facilities. Boxing clubs that have control over these spaces in their clubhouses, or who have input in to how these spaces are managed, should ensure that sanitary bins are provided. If clubs have access to changing rooms, they should ensure that women and girls can use these spaces – even if there is only one space available to the club. This could mean staggered use of the changing area. Clubs may also wish to consider putting together a travelling pack, for competition or sparring, to contain period products and hair ties, particularly for younger boxers. The pack can be put together at very low cost, and boxers should know of its existence and how to access it.

In Competition



Men and boys in competition are required to wear groin guards, and this has been standard practice for decades. Chest guards are as important for women and girls in competition or sparring. They are common in all combat sports, as repeated blows to the breast may increase the risk of development of lumps, known as fat necrosis. A groin guard, which constructed slightly differently to the male version, should also be worn, every time a woman or girl steps between the ropes. Boxing clubs, as they already do with young male boxers from an early age, should begin creating the culture of essential protective kit with female girls before their first spar. That culture building should also include training boxers with long hair to ensure it is securely braided, and a cap is worn, underneath headgear.



Menstruation

Coaches training women and girls in every sport need an understanding of the menstrual cycle, and particularly so in weight-class sport. This piece, by RTÉ Brainstorm, is very helpful in sketching out why periods matter in training athletes. Some coaches are comfortable speaking freely to their athletes about every factor that may affect their performance or training, and together with their boxer, can find the best way to optimise their boxer's performance. Some coaches are not comfortable speaking to women or girls about their menstrual cycles – some boxers are also not comfortable having these conversations; in this instance, women coaches, experienced competitive women boxers, women sports administrators, women volunteers, can fulfil a valuable role in enabling boxers to reach their full potential.

Coaching



Just one in 8 coaches in Ireland are women. All newly qualified coaches require support and guidance of their clubs – and those intending to coach need their club to advocate for them in putting them forward for coaching qualifications, and coach education. Some clubs are new to the women-in-coaching space as most currently active women coaches were not, themselves, competitive boxers. This is changing as more competitive women boxers transition to coaching roles, but they need the support of their club to do that. Other sports actively seek to recruit coaches from parent and volunteer groups connected with their clubs, and boxing should do the same.

Visibility

Clubs are, rightfully, proud of their boxers and coaches and may wish to profile them on their social media accounts.

Social media is a key tool in raising awareness of the visibility, and contribution, of women and girls to our sport. Clubs may consider profiling women and girls among their members on their social media accounts, alongside other members.

This is also important within the clubhouse.... All boxing clubs tell their stories on their gym walls, and women and girls in clubs should be part of those stories, if they are members of, or contribute to, the life of the club.

Voice

- **Members and volunteers should have opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their training and involvement in their club.**
- **Listening to their views and acting on them will help long term engagement in our sport.**
- **Don't assume to know what a member thinks or feels. Arrange a forum or space that members can voice their opinions on what they would like or want in their club.**
- **In our sport our clubs are generally male dominated and can be very hierarchical giving all the power and decision making to one or two coaches which can make it hard for females athletes and volunteers to feel included.**
- **Respect and recognition is important.**

Reporting

All boxing clubs have a Child Protection Officer/Children's Officer in place, who is their Designated Liaison Person.

In clubs where a man holds this important role, clubs may wish to consider appointing a secondary Designated Liaison Person, who may be female. There are some issues, which may not be safeguarding matters in their nature, but which are concerning to the boxer, which they may feel more comfortable reporting to a woman.

Clubs with a secondary DLP are not undermining the role, duties or responsibilities of their Child Protection Officer/Children's Officer– they are creating additional pathways of support for all of their boxers.

Clubs may also wish to create a photo-gallery of their committee and coaching staff, so that any and all new members, and parents, understand the structure of the club.

[Additional safeguarding information, supports and guidance are available here](#)

Club Champion

Clubs may wish to consider appointing a Club Champion.

This woman or girl isn't necessarily a medal winner or competitive athlete, but a positive female role model in the club.

This personalised contact can offer support and guidance to female members.

Making women and girls feel included and valued should be a motto adopted in all our clubs.

