



Raising the growth and participation
of female sport officials in Europe

LEARNING RESOURCES

/// PILLAR 2: RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION

SUB-PILLAR 2.2

**Raise the profile of
women in officiating by
using role models**



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Raise the profile of women in officiating by using role models

OVERVIEW

Role models play a crucial role in raising the profile of women sports officials and inspiring others to pursue similar paths.

🕒 Here are some ways in which role models can have a positive impact:

1. Visibility and representation:

Women sport officials who are visible and successful in their roles serve as powerful role models. Their presence helps challenge gender stereotypes and demonstrates that women can excel in officiating positions. Encourage women officials to actively participate in events, conferences, and media opportunities to increase their visibility and showcase their expertise.

2. Mentoring and guidance:

Established women sport officials can serve as mentors to aspiring officials. By sharing their knowledge, experiences, and advice, they can help guide and support women who are interested in entering the field. Mentorship programs and initiatives can be developed to facilitate these connections.

3. Sharing personal stories:

Role models can share their personal stories and journeys to inspire others. They can talk about the challenges they faced, how they overcame them, and the rewards and satisfaction they've experienced in their officiating careers. This storytelling can be done through interviews, articles, social media, or speaking engagements.

4. Leadership and advocacy:

Women sport officials who have reached leadership positions can use their influence to advocate for gender equality and inclusivity in sport officiating. They can actively promote policies and initiatives that support the recruitment, development, and retention of women officials. This may involve working with sport organisations, federations, and governing bodies to drive change.

5. Collaborations and networks:

Role models can foster collaborations and networks among women sport officials. By connecting officials at various levels and facilitating knowledge sharing, they can create a supportive community that fosters growth, learning, and professional development. This can be done through workshops, conferences, online forums, or networking events.

6. Recognition and awards:

Recognising the achievements and contributions of women sports officials through awards and accolades can raise their profile and inspire others. Establishing specific awards for women officials can help highlight their accomplishments and demonstrate the value they bring to the field.

7. Media coverage:

Role models can actively engage with the media to raise awareness of women sport officials. Encourage media outlets to feature stories, interviews, or profiles of successful women officials to showcase their expertise and inspire others. This media exposure can contribute to changing perceptions and attitudes towards women officials.

8. Collaborating with athletes and teams:

Role models can collaborate with athletes and sport teams to promote the importance of diversity and gender equality in officiating. This can involve joint initiatives, campaigns, or public appearances that highlight the significance of women officials and their contributions to the sporting community.

9. Engaging with youth and grassroots programs:

Role models can engage with youth and grassroots sports programs to inspire the next generation of officials. By conducting workshops, clinics, or mentoring sessions with aspiring young officials, they can provide guidance and encouragement to those starting their officiating journeys.

10. Continued personal growth:

Role models should continue their personal growth and development as officials. By staying updated on law/rule changes, participating in training programs, and seeking opportunities for advancement, they can maintain their expertise and demonstrate the ongoing commitment required for success.

By actively engaging in these strategies, role models can help raise the profile of women sport officials and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive sport officiating community.

👉 **Positive and successful role models are important for several reasons:**

1. Inspiration and motivation:

Role models serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for others. When individuals see someone who has achieved success or overcome challenges in a particular field or area of life, it ignites a belief that they can do the same. Role models provide tangible examples of what is possible, which can be highly motivating for individuals striving to achieve their own goals.

2. Breaking stereotypes and challenging norms:

Positive role models have the power to challenge stereotypes and break down societal norms. When individuals from underrepresented groups or marginalised communities achieve success, they defy stereotypes and prove that success is not limited to a specific gender, race, or background. This can help shift societal perceptions and create a more inclusive and equal society.

3. Guidance and mentorship:

Role models can offer guidance and mentorship to others who aspire to follow in their footsteps. They can provide valuable advice, share their experiences and lessons learned, and offer support and encouragement. This guidance can be instrumental in helping others navigate challenges and make informed decisions in their own pursuits.

4. Building self-confidence and self-belief:

Positive role models can help individuals build self-confidence and self-belief. Seeing someone who has achieved success despite obstacles can boost individuals' belief in their own capabilities. Role models show that with hard work, perseverance, and determination, one can overcome challenges and accomplish their goals, leading to increased self-confidence and a belief in one's own potential.

5. Setting high standards and expectations:

Role models set high standards and expectations for others to aspire to. By showcasing excellence in their respective fields, they raise the bar and inspire individuals to strive for greatness. Role models provide benchmarks for achievement and can encourage individuals to push beyond their comfort zones and reach their full potential.

6. Promoting positive values and behaviours:

Positive role models embody and promote positive values and behaviours. Their success is often a result of hard work, dedication, integrity, resilience, and other admirable qualities. By modelling these values and behaviours, they inspire others to adopt them as well, fostering a culture of excellence, ethics, and positive actions.

7. Fostering a sense of community and belonging:

Role models can bring people together and create a sense of community and belonging. When individuals see someone they admire or look up to, it creates a sense of connection and shared identity. This can foster a supportive community where individuals feel understood, validated, and encouraged to pursue their goals.

8. Generating hope and optimism:

Positive role models provide hope and optimism, especially in challenging or difficult times. Their success stories and achievements remind individuals that setbacks and obstacles can be overcome and that brighter futures are possible. Role models instil a sense of hope and optimism, which can be instrumental in motivating individuals to persist in their pursuits.

Overall, positive and successful role models play a vital role in inspiring, guiding, and empowering others. They have the ability to shape perspectives, challenge societal norms, and foster personal and societal growth. By showcasing what is possible, role models contribute to a more inclusive, aspirational, and resilient society.

>> CONTENT AREA 1: IDENTIFY PREVIOUS OR HIGH-PROFILE WOMEN SPORT OFFICIALS

There are several high-profile women sport officials who have made significant contributions to their respective sports.

👉 Here are a few examples:

1. Bibiana Steinhaus:

Bibiana Steinhaus is a German football referee who officiated in the top tier of German men's football, the Bundesliga. She became the first woman referee to officiate in a major European professional league.

2. Sian Massey-Ellis:

Sian Massey-Ellis is an English football referee who has officiated in the English Premier League and other high-level football competitions. She is known for her expertise and professionalism on the field.

3. Marika Domanski-Lyfors:

Marika Domanski-Lyfors is a Swedish football coach and former FIFA referee. She has officiated in numerous international matches and tournaments, including the FIFA Women's World Cup.

4. Michelle Joubert:

Michelle Joubert is a South African cricket umpire who has officiated in international matches, including men's Test matches and One-Day Internationals (ODIs). She is one of the few women umpires in international cricket.

5. Susan Redfern:

Susan Redfern is an English cricket umpire who has officiated in domestic men's elite cricket matches in England. She is currently the only women who umpires men's elite cricket in England.

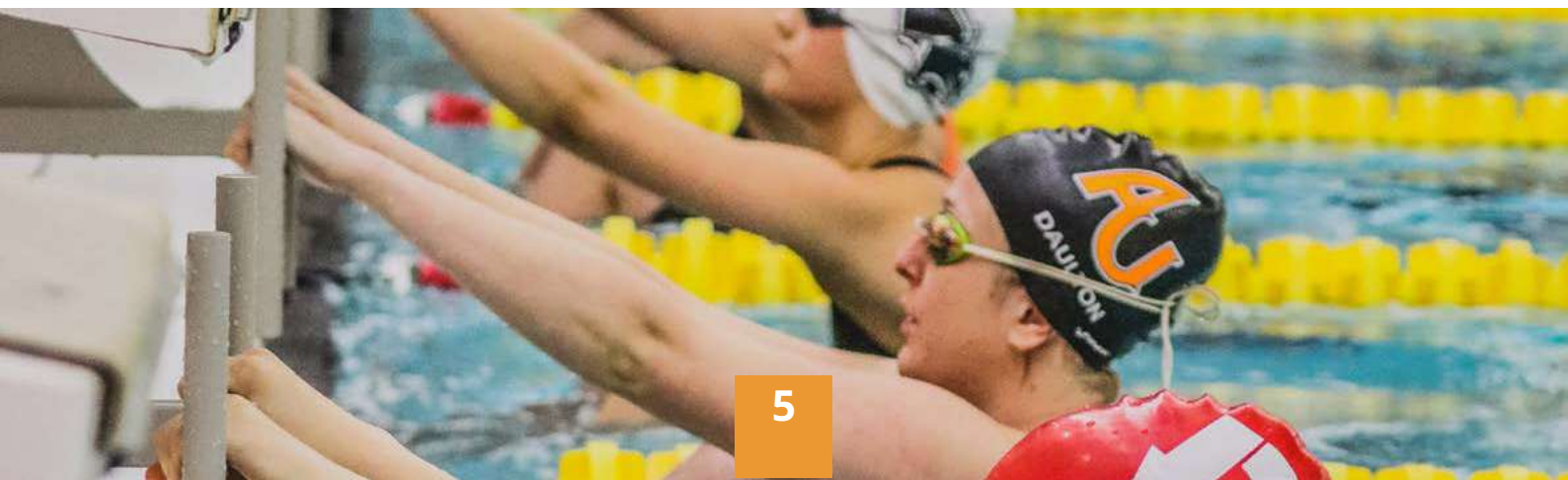
6. Katarina Wittich:

Katarina Wittich is a German ice hockey referee who has officiated in international tournaments and competitions, including the Olympic Games and IIHF World Championships. She has been recognised for her expertise and contributions to ice hockey officiating.

7. Stéphanie Frappart:

Stéphanie Frappart is a French football referee who made history by becoming the first women referee to officiate a major men's European competition match. She refereed the UEFA Super Cup final in 2019.

These are just a few examples of high-profile women sport officials who have achieved recognition and respect in their fields. Their contributions and accomplishments have paved the way for more opportunities and increased gender diversity in sports officiating.





>> CONTENT AREA 2: USE IMAGES, CLIPS, STORYTELLING OF ROLE MODELS. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING AN OFFICIAL; AT ALL LEVELS

Being a woman sport official at any level can bring a range of benefits, both personally and for the broader sports community.

🕒 Here are some advantages of being a woman sports official:

1. Breaking gender barriers:

By becoming a woman sport official, individuals contribute to breaking down gender barriers and challenging stereotypes. They help pave the way for future generations of women and inspire them to pursue their passion for sports officiating.

2. Increased representation:

Women sport officials bring diversity and representation to the field. Their presence helps create a more inclusive and equitable sports environment, showcasing that officiating is not limited to a particular gender.

3. Role modelling and inspiration:

As a woman sport official, they become a role model and inspire others, particularly young girls and women, to get involved in sport officiating and pursue further officiating roles. Their achievements can motivate them to overcome barriers and pursue their own officiating aspirations.

4. Opportunities for personal growth:

Being a sport official provides opportunities for personal growth and development. Individuals can enhance their knowledge of the sport, develop their decision-making skills, improve their communication and leadership abilities, and gain valuable experience in managing high-pressure situations.

5. Building a sense of community:

As a sport official, individuals become part of a community of officials, coaches, athletes, and sport administrators. This community offers networking opportunities, camaraderie, and a shared passion for the sport. They can form connections with like-minded individuals and foster lasting relationships.

6. Contribution to fair play:

Sport officials play a critical role in ensuring fair play and upholding the laws/rules and integrity of the sport. By becoming a woman sport official, they actively contribute to maintaining the fairness and sportsmanship of the sport, promoting a positive and respectful sporting environment.



7. Personal satisfaction:

Officiating can be immensely rewarding, both personally and professionally. The sense of accomplishment that comes from successfully officiating a sport event, witnessing athletes perform at their best, and being part of the sporting action can provide a deep sense of satisfaction and fulfilment.

8. Lifelong learning:

Officiating provides continuous opportunities for learning and growth. Individuals can stay updated with law/rule changes, attend training sessions and workshops, and engage in ongoing professional development. This commitment to learning can enhance their officiating skills and broaden their understanding of the sport.

9. Travel and exposure to different levels of competition:

Depending on the level of sport officiating, individuals may have opportunities to travel to different locations and officiate at various levels of competition. This exposure allows them to experience different sporting cultures, meet diverse individuals, and expand their horizons.

10. Contribution to the sport:

As a sport official, individuals contribute to the overall development and success of the sport. Their role ensures that matches, events and competitions can take place smoothly, providing athletes with a platform to showcase their skills. By officiating, they make a valuable contribution to the growth and sustainability of the sport.

These benefits highlight the significance of women sport officials and the positive impact they can have on the sporting community. By embracing officiating roles, women can play an integral part in shaping the future of sport and fostering an environment of inclusivity and equality.

Top Tips

1. Sell the benefits of officiating, especially being the guardians of standards and applying laws/rules fairly in their sport.
2. Share the importance of the role.
3. Ensure appropriate positive images are used of role models.
4. Select your role models carefully and engage with them and seek agreement to use their image and story to promote women sport officials.
5. Demonstrate through case studies and good news stories how inclusive your sport is.



>> CONTENT AREA 3: CREATE SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR 'ROLE MODELS'

The criteria for women sports officials role models can vary depending on the context and the specific role they are expected to play. However, there are certain qualities and characteristics that are commonly associated with effective role models.

🕒 **Here are some criteria to consider when identifying role models:**

1. Achievements and success:

Role models are individuals who have achieved notable success in their respective fields. They have demonstrated excellence, overcome challenges, and accomplished significant milestones. Their achievements serve as inspiration and motivation for others. This could include a woman official who has been qualified for a while and has had some decent experience within the role.

2. Integrity and ethics:

Role models are individuals of high moral character who demonstrate integrity, honesty, and ethical behaviour. They serve as examples of principled conduct and can guide others in making ethical decisions and choices.

3. Leadership qualities:

Role models exhibit strong leadership qualities, including the ability to inspire, influence, and guide others. They demonstrate effective communication skills, empathy, and the ability to empower and support others in their growth and development.

4. Resilience and perseverance:

Women sport officials who serve as role models have often faced obstacles and setbacks but have shown resilience and perseverance in overcoming them. They possess the determination and drive to pursue their goals despite challenges, and they can inspire others to do the same.

5. Positive influence:

Role models have a positive impact on others and inspire them to become their best selves. They promote positive values, behaviours, and attitudes, and they serve as catalysts for personal and societal growth.

6. Empathy and compassion:

Role models demonstrate empathy and compassion towards others. They are understanding and supportive, and they use their influence to uplift and help others succeed. They prioritise the well-being and growth of those around them.

7. Commitment to personal growth:

Role models are committed to their own personal growth and continuous learning. They actively seek opportunities for self-improvement, stay updated with developments in their field, and strive for excellence.

8. Influence and visibility:

Role models have a significant presence and influence in their respective domains. They are visible and accessible to others, whether through their accomplishments, public speaking engagements, mentoring relationships, or active engagement in their communities.

9. Authenticity and relatability:

Women sport officials role models are authentic and relatable individuals who connect with others on a personal level. They share their experiences, vulnerabilities, and lessons learned, making them more approachable and relatable to those who look up to them.

10. Commitment to social impact:

Role models often demonstrate a commitment to social impact and contribute to the betterment of sport officiating. They may engage in advocacy work, or initiatives that promote equality, justice, and positive change.

It's important to remember that no individual is perfect, and role models may exhibit both strengths and areas for growth. However, they serve as aspirational figures who inspire and guide others to reach their full potential.

Top Tips

1. Identify women officials who can serve as role models in your sport that meet the above criteria.
2. Create a role description for a women sports official role model.
3. Identify how you will utilise role models to best effect in promoting women sport officials.
4. Allocate initiatives to role models to ensure they have a clear 'job to do'.
5. Look at positive ways to communicate to key stakeholders who your role models are and their role within sport officiating.



>> CONTENT AREA 4: MANAGE EXPECTATIONS OF THE ROLE MODEL

Managing the expectations of being a role model can be crucial to maintaining a healthy balance in their own life while still positively impacting others.

🕒 **Here are some strategies for managing expectations effectively:**

1. Define individuals' values and boundaries:

The individual to understand their own personal values and priorities. They must clarify what is important to them and establish boundaries around their time, energy, and commitments. This will help them set realistic expectations for themselves and communicate them clearly to others.

2. Be authentic and true to yourself:

Stay true to who they are and be authentic in their actions and interactions. They must avoid trying to meet unrealistic expectations or trying to be someone they're not. Embrace their uniqueness and let their genuine qualities shine through.

3. Communicate openly and honestly:

They must clearly communicate their capabilities, limitations, and availability to those who look up to them. Be honest about what they can realistically offer in terms of time, advice, or support. Open communication helps manage expectations and prevents misunderstandings.

4. Focus on their own well-being:

Prioritise self-care and well-being to ensure the individual has the physical, mental, and emotional capacity to be a positive role model. They should set aside time for relaxation, hobbies, and activities that recharge and rejuvenate them. Taking care of themselves enables them to better support and inspire others.

5. Emphasize the journey, not just the outcome:

Encourage others to focus on the process, growth, and effort rather than solely the end result. Highlight the importance of perseverance, learning from failures, and embracing challenges as opportunities for growth. This helps set realistic expectations and fosters a healthier mindset.

6. Role Model to share own struggles and setbacks:

Be open about the challenges they have faced and the setbacks they have experienced. This helps others understand that success is not always linear and that everyone faces obstacles along the way. By sharing their own journey, they humanise the role model experience and provide a realistic perspective.

7. Encourage individuality and self-discovery:

Promote individuality and self-discovery in those who look up to them. Emphasise the importance of discovering their own passions, strengths, and values. Encourage them to set their own goals and define success on their own terms.

8. Seek support and mentorship:

They should surround themselves with a support network that includes mentors, peers, or other role models who can offer guidance, perspective, and encouragement. Having a support system can help them navigate the responsibilities and expectations that come with being a role model.

9. Set realistic expectations:

Set realistic expectations for themselves and for those who view them as a role model. Highlight the importance of progress, growth, and continuous learning rather than placing undue pressure on achieving perfection or meeting unreachable standards.

10. Accept that you can't please everyone:

Role models to understand they cannot meet everyone's expectations or be everything to everyone. Focus on making a positive impact within their capabilities and accept that not everyone will resonate with their message or approach. Embrace the fact that different people connect with different role models.

Remember, being a role model is a privilege, but it's important to prioritise their own well-being and manage expectations to ensure a healthy and sustainable impact on others.

Top Tips

1. The role model to be clear on their expectations of the role, including time and support of others.
2. Communicate with all stakeholders to ensure all are clear on the expectations of the role.
3. Share lived experience to inspire and motivate others.
4. Ensure there is a strong support mechanism surrounding the role model and the women sport officials.
5. Be mindful of the 'pairing' of role models and women officials, as there is a possibility of personality clashes at times.



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