



Embracing Equality in Sports Coaching

“It is now well known that equitable sporting opportunities positively effect the health of the nation, improve community cohesion, can raise standards in schools and increase a nation’s medal tally. In addition, the demographic make up of the UK population will change radically in the next 10 years and sports organisations need to seek out those groups who traditionally participate less to ensure a stable participation base from which our future medallists can be drawn. Women, black and ethnic minority groups and disabled people all having the right to sporting opportunities and those with the talent and desire should be encouraged to strive for the highest levels of performance.” – *The Equality Standard, A Framework for Sport (2004)*. **Sue Campbell CBE Chair, UK Sport**

What is Equality?

Equality is about recognising and accepting that people are principally different and can not be treated the same in any organisation. Nonetheless, everyone deserves the same opportunity to participate and must be treated fairly and given the same chance as anyone else. These principles also apply to sport and leisure.

What is Diversity?

Diversity is about valuing individual difference. A ‘diversity’ based approach in coaching ensures that coaches build positive relationships with the people they are coaching and create an environment where all can discover their potential. For example, in wheelchair basketball the classification system is used in order to ensure players who have different physical impairments have equal opportunity to partake in the sport and



therefore, are not placed at a disadvantage. This means that players of a higher classification can compete alongside a player of a lower classification.

Recognising, acknowledging, responding to and embracing differences are essential in building successful relationships and maximising the potential and performance of the athlete being coached.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of achieving equality in your club are wide and various. Some examples include:

- Increase the number of people participating in your club/team and thus giving you access to people who can undertake supporting roles such as administration, management and volunteering
- Disability sport becomes more visible and widely accepted in the mainstream community
- Benefit from the different skills, knowledge, and innovation and respond better to difference.
- Provide access to diverse funding streams
- You will be working within the equalities legislation including the Race Relations Act & Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Sex Discrimination Act and the Disability Discrimination Act
- Positively contribute to building a stronger cohesive community where difference is understood, accepted and celebrated
- Promotes the greater inclusion of disabled people in all communities



Religion and ethics in sport. Some basic principles:

- Sikhs may feel a religious obligation to wear a turban.
- Many Muslims may wish to practice their faith which may mean taking time out from training/matches.
- Wiccans may want to work on a Christian holiday in exchange for having one of their Sabbats off work.
- Many Jews may not wish to play/train on a Friday evening and may want to attend religious services.
- A Christian, employed on rotating shifts, might wish to have every Sunday off work.
- Focusing on beliefs and practices which are of real importance in each religious tradition, rather than making all religions conform to one model.

Further reading

Religion and Ethics Calendar

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/>

The Interfaith Network for the UK

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/religiousdress.pdf>

Adults with a Disability and Sport National Findings 2001/02 (Sport

England)http://www.sportengland.org/adult_disability_headline_findings.pdf