

## **A GUIDE TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL WOMEN & GIRLS DEVELOPMENT DAY**

**As always every club is very individual, with different needs, facilities and aspirations. Please use this as a simple guide that may help point you in the right direction when considering what could be done to run a successful Women and Girls (W&Gs) development day. It should help answer some questions such as: why should we run a women's development day? Do we need to use female coaches? What would we do differently? What do girls respond to best and what should be avoided, if anything?**

### **Background Information**

Research has shown that W&Gs respond better to the social, health and well-being characteristics of sport rather than competition. By running a female only session this creates an atmosphere of fun and camaraderie and can really help in developing confidence both socially and on the water. Female only sessions are often very well received and can play a big part in increasing participation levels.

If your club does not have enough female coaches for the day it is still worth running using male coaches- just make sure the male coaches are aware of the aims and objectives and it would also be helpful if they read the Canoe England guidance notes for clubs on how to attract, retain and develop women and girls in Paddlesport.

Running a female only session should not be perceived as discriminatory. The fact that canoeing (like many other sports) is a very male dominated sport means that it is fully justified for the development of the sport to target areas of under-representation such as W&Gs.

### **Key aims and objectives**

Any W&Gs sessions or days should try to meet the following key aims and objectives;

- **Encourage more women and girls into Paddlesport**
- **Create a fun, welcoming experience**
- **Help build confidence & camaraderie**
- **Create a support structure**
- **Provide shared experiences**
- **Make it a social event**



## 15 STEPS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL W&Gs DEVELOPMENT DAY

1. Make sure you have enough people/ resources/ equipment available at your club. Your Paddlesport Development Officer may be able to help source some more equipment for you.
2. If you have good links with another local sports club it could be worth joining up with them, having a combined day providing more support and help and making a bigger event.
3. Create a rough plan for the day- what will be available and what people would need to bring. This could help in the advertising so people know exactly what to expect and may entice them along.
4. Select a date and time that would be most accessible to capture the biggest number of participants.
5. Consider how the day could be linked to a social event e.g. BBQ, coffee morning, picnic. Again use this in the advertisement for the day.
6. Advertise the day as broadly as possible (when advertising bear in mind the total number that the club could cope with on the day).
  - Ask current club members to invite friends and family. Could be advertised as mothers & daughters, sisters & aunts, grandmothers & granddaughters or bring a friend day!
  - Advertise in workplace staff rooms.
  - Word of mouth
  - Community publications
  - Local papers
  - Social network sites e.g. Facebook
  - Club website
7. Where possible ask people to book in advance so you know approximately what numbers to expect.
8. Make sure you have clean toilets and changing facilities providing suitable privacy and, if not, consider what you could do to resolve this for the day. This is a high factor in many females' experiences with sport and can be the thing that stops them from ever coming back!
9. Try to have different boats available to have a variety of session ideas, e.g.
  - Raft building
  - Technique session
  - Games
  - Tour
10. Where possible make sure the equipment is suitable and clean.
11. Have the day well planned so there is not too much hanging around as this could put people off.
12. Create a buddy system pairing less experienced paddlers with more experienced.
13. Coaches should consider their coaching style to ensure that the women and girls are encouraged and supported.
14. Offer a follow up session to come back to. Provide information about what club sessions might be suitable.
15. Ask for feedback. This will provide you with invaluable information for any future event.

## **ON THE DAY REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING;**

- Keep it fun and relaxed
- Try not to make it too competitive
- Allow people to progress at their own pace and do not push people into doing something they do not want to do.
- Keep the social aspect high on the agenda.
- Try to provide technical input if people are seeking help. (Females respond well to technical feedback)
- Provide information on what people could do next if they enjoyed the session.
- Try not to make people sign up to a year's club membership straight away.



**Other useful documents to read** (these can be found on the website link detailed below):

- Canoe England Guidance Notes for clubs on how to attract, retain and develop women and girls in Paddlesport.
- Cuckmere Valley Canoe Club Women's Development Day Case Study
- Durham Kayak Club Ladies Day Case Study
- Women and Girls Surf Development Project Case Study

We encourage all clubs to run a Women and Girls day or session and ask that you let us know how it went so we can use your experience and feedback to help other clubs and ultimately increase the number of women and girls in Paddlesport.

For further information on developing Women and Girls in Paddlesport visit [www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/women-and-girls](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/women-and-girls)