



Be TT project leads to boost for women coaches

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A successful Be TT project led to the first women-only coaching course run by Table Tennis England, with eight female coaches taking their Level 1 qualification.

Norwich City Table Tennis Club was awarded funding under Year 2 of the Be TT programme and was able to provide a range of opportunities for women and girls.

The club introduced women's table tennis by offering a 10-week free programme to help develop women's skills in preparation for a women's league.

Be TT funding then supported the development of the league and, after the initial 10 weeks of coaching, five teams entered. The format saw matches played once a month over a four-month period, allowing players the opportunity to practise in between fixtures.

During the course of the project, it became clear that a number of women were keen to take their Level 1 Coaching qualification, which the club realised would also help the long-term development of women and girls participation in the area.

The first day of the women's course took place in early October, with coach tutor Maria Ingles tutoring, and was a huge success with all women engaging fully in the course.

The second day is next month, after which the participants will undergo their assessments to become fully qualified.

Participant Connie Dowe said: "As someone with limited previous experience playing table tennis I was a little apprehensive before starting the course.

"However after just a few hours tutoring we were each able to independently lead a successful group activity. Our tutor, Maria, was wonderfully patient and extremely knowledgeable about sports coaching.

"The course was well organised and I found it thoroughly engaging throughout. I would highly recommend this course to anybody who is looking to begin or continue their coaching journey."

Stuart Laws (Head Coach at Norwich Table Tennis Club) who has been very influential in the development of women's table tennis in Norwich said: "Our club is all about breaking down the barriers that exists in our sport and giving opportunities for people to get involved who perhaps haven't had the opportunity before."

"I remember when doing some rehab after a knee operation how uncomfortable I felt joining a yoga class and being the only male, and felt maybe females felt the same when joining a male-dominated table tennis session."

"Those that want to compete at a high level seem to do well in mixed groups, but participation levels for lower levels in clubs is low. Local league has 2-3% female participants. Thanks to various ventures our club now has 25-30% female participants."

"I believe the training of females coaches is key to growing female participants even further, and having a group from such varied backgrounds has been very enriching for everyone involved, and will really freshen up the local coaching scene and enable us to offer more opportunities to those wanting to get involved in our sport."

"The bigger we grown the participant base, the more chances we have of obtaining better facilities and up-skilling players and coaches."

Good luck to all participants who have started their Level 1 at Norwich City.

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