



## Bath League blazes a trail for women and girls

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Be TT funding has helped the Bath League make big strides to engage women and girls in table tennis.

The league was approached by Table Tennis England to work on a Be TT intervention project after our insight and data showed that the league had very low player dropout rates but few females engaged in their league.

This showed that the league clearly had a great, well-formed programme but that, for some reason, it wasn't attracting women and girls.

With an offer of staff support and funding from Table Tennis England to work on a women and girls specific programme, the league's committee was very keen to investigate further and decided to run two eight-week courses of coaching.

A total of 22 women attended one or other of these, and six attended both. The first round of coaching was oversubscribed (12 places, 16 women signed up) and two women who signed up actually just went straight back to playing in the league.

Gemma Parry, South West Development Officer at Table Tennis England said: "It was really interesting to speak to the coach of the initial eight-week programme who said the participants knew exactly what they wanted and he had to adapt his sessions every week to accommodate their needs. He had found it great to have a new challenge."

The league also ran a local UKCC L1 coaching course for new coaches who were eager to support this programme and get qualified, and eight people from the area took up this offer, with the league offering coach bursaries out of their own league funds.

Gemma added: "I met one of the new coaches at an event for National Table Tennis Day and he was so proud to call himself an L1 coach and he was so grateful to have been able to get his coaching certificate.

"He is really looking forward to getting more women and girls engaged in the game and we spoke at length

about how the project can continue to develop now there is a bank of coaches to support it.”

The league’s programme is now self-sustainable, with another eight-week coaching project running in the Autumn term, alongside local meetup group sessions for those who do not want formal coaching.

Gemma continued: “This project has been successful in getting more women and girls into the Bath League, to create more table tennis opportunities in the area for women and girls, but to also offer a pathway from social play to competitive play and back again to suit the different needs of the women and girls at different times of their lives.

“And I think it’s great that it is being supported by coaches and clubs not only in the Bath area, but also in the Bristol area.

“Bath League have been fantastic to work with and I am really pleased to see this project develop further and further. They have done so much with this project and funding.

“It just goes to show that with a proactive league committee who are willing to adapt their offer to what insight and data shows, you can get new people into a league offer.

“The way they have used feedback from participants on a weekly basis has been really inspiring, and has been key to the programme’s success.”

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