

Great Coaches Don't Just Teach the Game — They Change Lives

By The Coaching HER® Team

October is a month to celebrate the coaches who make sport better for girls and women. On and off the field, coaches are more than teachers of drills and plays, they are mentors, motivators, and role models. Their impact can change the way girls see themselves in sport and in life.

At the same time, *International Day of the Girl* reminds us that every girl deserves the chance to play, lead, and belong. Together, these moments highlight the importance of coaches who model inclusion, create safe environments, and open pathways for girls to grow into athletes, leaders, and confident young women.

Why Coaches Matter

The numbers speak volumes. Research shows that negative coaching experiences are one of the primary reasons girls leave sport—and girls are more likely than boys to cite coaching problems as the cause of dropping out (Keathley et al., 2013). When girls feel supported and valued by their coaches, they are more likely to thrive and stay in sport.

80% of girls say a positive coach relationship is a top reason they keep playing.

([Aspen Institute Project Play, 2020](#)).

Girls who feel heard by coaches are **2.5× more likely to stay in sport.**

([Aspen Institute Project Play, 2020](#))

When coaches foster environments that **prioritize girls' choices and voices**, girls are more likely to report higher perceived competence, autonomy, relatedness, and motivation in sport.
([Reynolds & McDonough, 2015](#)).

Youth athletes who **experience supportive coach behaviors** are more likely to report having positive coach athlete relationships, which are significantly associated with athletes' intention to continue playing sports
([Wekesser et al., 2021](#))

This October, we celebrate the coaches who are changing the game and we invite every coach, parent, and leader to join them. Coaching HER®'s [Supporting Girls' Needs](#) module offers practical, evidence-based strategies to help you meet girls' core psychological needs and ensure every athlete feels cared for, competent, and has choices.



A Call to Leaders and Parents

Coaches don't do this work alone. Leaders can invest in training and resources that help every coach meet girls' needs for care, competence, and choice. Parents too play a role by supporting coaches who emphasize joy, mastery, and good sport behavior over pressure or comparison.

The 3C Formula: Care, Competence, and Choice

Coaching HER®, is founded on research which states that meeting and supporting three core psychological needs help keep girls engaged in sport:



- **Care** — Girls need to belong, and feel seen, supported, and valued as individuals.
- **Competence** — Girls need opportunities to develop skills and experience success that builds confidence.
- **Choice** — Girls need a voice in shaping their sport experience, from practice roles to team culture.

Simple Everyday Actions to Apply the 3C Formula

- ✓ Check in with players about how they are feeling, on and off the field.
- ✓ Highlight effort, improvement, and teamwork, not just winning.
- ✓ Give girls opportunities to lead drills, share input, and make decisions.
- ✓ Create a team culture where every girl feels welcome, respected, and safe.

When coaches meet girls' 3C needs, they do more than keep girls on the roster. They create environments where girls flourish. Take the FM6 [Supporting Girls' Needs](#) today and discover how you can be the reason a girl stays in sport, grows in confidence, and sees herself as a leader.

These actions send a powerful message: you belong here, your voice matters, and your growth matters.

References

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