

 **COACHES ARMOURY**

OVERCOMING DROPOUT

RESOURCES

OVERCOMING DROPOUT

BEHIND THE DROPOUT

A survey of more than 1,000 girls ages 16 to 24 revealed 7 out of the 10 girls who quit sports during puberty said they didn't feel like they belonged in sports. Nearly the same number (67%) said they felt that society doesn't encourage girls to play sports.

The menstrual cycle is a big reason why. Girls may be exposed to comments about weight gain and references to "that time of the month." Female hormonal cycles are often seen as an inconvenience, but by learning to understand and work with her hormones instead can help girls continue playing and completing. Female coaches, remember how confusing and hard that time was for you when you were younger? Males coaches, remember that the young girls are just as confused by what is going on with their bodies and emotions as you are.

THE FACTS

- **By the age of 14, girls are dropping out of sports at twice the rate of boys, according to the Women's Sports Foundation.**
- **by age 17, after most girls have gone through puberty, more than half of girls - 51% - will have quit sports, according to a survey sponsored by Always.**

OVERCOMING DROPOUT

CHALLENGES FOR COACHES OF FEMALE ATHLETES

CHALLENGES

- **Physical challenges-** Changes during puberty while conforming to society's image of a female and her body
- **Lack of access –** girls have fewer opportunities than boys to participate in sports at the high school and college level.
- **Safety and transportation –** In some cases, there are no sports facilities for girls in their local area, and traveling to participate poses issues of access, safety and cost.
- **Social stigma –** It is still seen as unfeminine for a female to be sporty. Bullying and social isolation can dissuade girls from competing.
- **Decreased quality of experience –** In the majority of environments, priority is given to boys sports, meaning girls may have less funding and lower quality facilities, equipment and uniforms.
- **Cost –** School or park districts can only have one team because of cost. It may prevent girls from playing a sport they love if they have to play with and against boys.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- **Build confidence**
- **Build leadership**
- **How to work in a team**
- **Handle winning and losing**
- **Benefits mentally and physically in their career as an athlete and beyond**

OVERCOMING DROPOUT

EXERCISES, AND/OR THINGS TO IMPLEMENT AS A COACH

- Find role models – everyday women that are not famous can be role models.
- Make sports fun.
- Encourage activities that are not competitive.
- Encourage & facilitate peer support.
- Teach & encourage that they can do it.
- Understand how the menstrual cycle can affect a female's mind and body.
- Educate the benefits of playing sports and that you do not have to be a superstar to continue to play.

EXAMPLE EXERCISES

- Team scavenger hunt
- Pair teammates up to support each other away from the sport
- Volunteer to support a girls team that is younger by attending their game as a team
- Team meal night twice a month

**Giving the young girls a fun experience that builds their confidence is most important. A great way to build confidence is through goal setting. Check out "Training the Mind" section of the Coaches Armoury for handouts and content on goal setting.