

Women in Sport Leadership: Summary Report

Research Digest no. 93

*A research study for **sportscotland***

by

George Street Research

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This report is the work of Andra Laird, Diarmid Campbell-Jack and Rosemary Clapton at George Street Research.

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Background and Objectives

Women and sport forms an important part of the **sportscotland** equity strategy, which is aimed at helping to achieve a sporting environment that supports and promotes the principles of equity. One part of this strategy is to ensure that women are sufficiently represented in leadership roles in Scotland. In order to understand the current position of women in sports leadership roles within Scotland, **sportscotland** commissioned George Street Research to undertake research into the subject.

Methodology

There were two main elements to the study, desk research and a quantitative evaluation. Details of the quantitative methodology are noted below.

There were eight different groups that formed the overall sample:

- Governing bodies of sport.
- Local authorities and trusts.
- Local sports councils.
- Sports clubs
- Sports institutes.
- Sports science departments at universities.
- **sportscotland**
- Scottish Executive Tourism, Culture and Sport Group.

Separate questionnaires were designed for each of the groups in bullets one to six above, with input from **sportscotland** staff. Each questionnaire was first piloted among actual respondents before being finalised.

The sample for each group was drawn up with the help of **sportscotland**. For the clubs sample, a database of relevant clubs was drawn up from contacts provided by Yellow Pages and from lists of clubs sent by governing bodies and local sports councils. All clubs were then added to a database, which was sorted to remove duplicate clubs. This resulted in a database containing the contact details of approximately 2,800 clubs from which the final sample of 500 clubs was drawn¹.

Questionnaires were then sent to each potential respondent, with the questionnaires being sent again to those respondents who did not reply. Where necessary, phone calls were also made to encourage response. In addition the questionnaires were put onto the internet to enable interviewees to respond at their computer if they wished. Table 1 shows the response rates achieved.

¹ The final 500 clubs were primarily selected by following the basic pattern of clubs surveyed in the **sportscotland** study: *Sports Clubs in Scotland* Research Report no. 75. 2001. Edinburgh: **sportscotland**.

Table 1: Response rate

Sample Group	Potential sample size	Number of respondents	Percentage of group responding
Clubs	500	116	23%
Governing bodies of sport	110	35	32%
Local authorities	35	23	66%
University sports science departments	8	4	50%
Institutes of sport	7	5	71%

Base: Total sample

In addition, information was obtained on the gender of post holders in the Scottish Executive Tourism, Culture and Sport Group, and **sportscotland**. Available information on the Scottish Commonwealth Games 2002 team was also analysed.

It should be noted that sample sizes are small for some of the groups surveyed and this is noted where appropriate throughout the report. It should also be noted that the survey includes all those in particular roles, whether paid or voluntary.

Research Results

Desk Research

As expected, a detailed analysis of existing information showed that there was little information available on gender balance in sports leadership. Contextual information was available on a range of connected issues. Information on gender balance in the workplace showed female participation in the labour market to be lower than male (53.8% compared with 70.2%), with females accounting for less than a third (32%) of managers².

In terms of adult participation in sport in Scotland, participation was higher for males than females (69% compared with 60%), with women participating in a narrower range of sports than males³. Scottish and UK figures did show, however, that women's participation in sport has been rising since 1987 while men's has been fairly static.⁴

Sports Club Survey

The clubs surveyed included a wide range of sizes and sports but, on average, a club consisted mainly of adult male members. The average club membership included 103 adult males, 62 adult females, 47 under-16 males

² Kay, H (2001) Women and Men in the Professions in Scotland. Scottish Executive Central Research Unit.

³ *Sports Participation in Scotland 2001*, Research Digest no. 90 **sportscotland**, 2002

⁴ *General Household Survey*, The Office for National Statistics, 1996

and 15 under-16 females. When clubs were grouped according to size, the same pattern emerged in terms of age and sex.

The gender balance in membership was mirrored in terms of the gender balance in leadership positions, including coaching roles. Of the 60% of clubs with specialist coaching staff, 89% had male coaching staff and only 47% female coaching staff.

The following table shows the level of qualification of coaches by gender. The percentage figures show the proportion of clubs with a coach at any level (e.g. 20% of clubs had a national level coach and 19% of clubs had a male national level coach).

Club Survey

Table 2: Gender of specialist coaching staff by qualification level (percentage of clubs)

Qualification level	Total (N = 70)	Male (N = 70)	Female (N = 70)
National	20%	19%	10%
Advanced	39%	31%	13%
Club	67%	56%	36%
Introductory	31%	29%	11%
Unqualified	29%	26%	9%
Total	100%	89%	47%

Base: All clubs which used coaches and provided information

The majority of clubs (67%) had club level coaches, with 39% having coaches at the advanced level and 20% at the (top) national level. Approximately a third of clubs had coaches at introductory levels (31%) or unqualified coaches (29%). Comparison by gender showed that more clubs had male coaches at each of these levels than female.

Information on the age group coached by male and female coaches is contained within the following table:

Club Survey

Table 3: Gender of specialist coaching staff by age group coached (percentage of clubs)

Age Group	Total (N = 70)	Male (N = 70)	Female (N = 70)
16 and over	76%	66%	30%
12 – 15	59%	50%	24%
Under 12	44%	39%	20%
Total	100%	89%	47%

Base: Clubs which used coaches and provided information

Over three-quarters (76%) of clubs had coaches to teach (primarily) those aged over 16 years, reflecting the fact that 95% of clubs have adult members. A large proportion (59%) coached 12 to 15 year olds, with 44% coaching under 12 year olds. A similar pattern was seen when male and female coaches were examined. More clubs had male coaches for the top age group (66%) than for 12 to 15s (50%) or under 12s (39%), and although less clubs had female coaches at all, the same basic pattern was visible (30% compared with 24% and 20%).

Information on the gender balance in clubs leadership roles is contained in the following table.

Club Survey

Table 4: Leadership roles (percentage of clubs)

Role	Total (N = 114)	Males (N = 114)	Females (N = 114)
Secretary	93%	57%	44%
Chair	92%	82%	18%
Treasurer	92%	59%	37%
Chief/head coach(es)	57%	49%	18%
Team captain	47%	43%	20%
Team manager	38%	36%	10%
Match/Company secretary	10%	8%	5%
Child protection officer	2%	1%	1%
Other committee members	22%	19%	21%
Other coaches	5%	4%	3%
Any other	17%	12%	13%

Base: All clubs

Clubs generally were more likely to have males than females in most of these leadership roles. This was particularly true of chairs (82% of clubs with a male chair compared with 18% with a female chair), chief or head coaches (49% compared with 18%), team managers (36% compared with 10%) and team captains (43% compared with 20%). There was less difference in terms of the proportions with male and female treasurers (59% compared with 37%) and, particularly, secretaries (57% compared with 44%) and other committee members (19% compared with 21%).

When results were analysed according to whether the club's membership was mainly male or female it emerged that clubs with a mainly female membership were more likely to have an equal split between the genders in leadership roles, with the exception of treasurers (11% of clubs with a male treasurer compared with 72% with a female) and secretaries who were largely female (17% male compared with 67% female). Clubs with mainly male members were, however, more likely to have males than females in each leadership role, with the exception of other committee members (23% with a male compared with 26% with a female) and other leadership roles (9% for each).

Clubs were generally happy, with the balance in leadership roles in their organisation, with 49% stating they felt the gender balance in leadership roles was very satisfactory, and 38% that it was fairly satisfactory. Those who felt it was very or fairly satisfactory considered that the leadership gender balance matched the gender split in membership (31%) or noted that roles were voluntary or elected (27%). Other comments were that gender was not an issue or that the gender balance they had worked well (24%), that there was a good balance of gender in membership and leadership (also 24%) or that they were non-discriminatory or had an equal opportunities policy (14%).

Governing Body Survey

Almost all (91%) of the governing bodies that were surveyed had at least one male coach, with less (73%) having at least one female coach. Details on the qualification of these coaches is contained in the following table.

Governing Body Survey

Table 5: Gender of specialist coaching staff by qualification level (percentage of governing bodies)

Qualification level	Total (N = 21)	Male (N = 21)	Female (N = 21)
National	77%	73%	50%
Advanced	55%	50%	36%
Club	50%	41%	27%
Introductory	32%	23%	32%
Unqualified	18%	18%	5%
Total	100%	91%	73%

Base: Governing bodies which had coaching staff and provided details

Not surprisingly, governing bodies tended to have higher level coaches compared with clubs. Approximately three-quarters (77%) of governing bodies had a national coach, 55% an advanced coach and 50% a club level coach. Only 32%, however, had introductory level coaches and 18% unqualified ones. The governing bodies were generally more likely to have male than female coaches, with the exception of introductory level coaches.

The following table illustrates the age group that coaches mainly provided coaching for.

Governing Body Survey

Table 6: Gender of specialist coaching staff by age group coached (percentage of governing bodies)

Age group coached	Clubs with coaches (N =21)	Male coaches (N = 21)	Female coaches (N = 21)
16 and over	100%	95%	62%
12 – 15	62%	48%	43%
Under 12	24%	19%	19%
Total	100%	91%	73%

Base: Governing bodies with coaches

All the governing bodies who used coaches provided coaching for the 16+ age group, with fewer using coaches mainly for 12 to 15 year olds (62%). Even fewer had coaches mainly coaching under 12s (24%). There was a greater difference in the number of governing bodies with male and female coaches to teach adults (95% with male compared with 62% with female) than 12 to 15s (48% male compared with 43% female) or under 12s (19% for both).

As with clubs, leadership roles in governing bodies tended to be held by males rather than females. The exceptions to this were the higher proportion of governing bodies with female secretaries (38% with a female secretary compared with 29% with male) and the fairly equal number of sports development officers (26% female compared with 29% male). Males were more likely than females to be in the more senior board positions, such as president (53% male compared with 12% female), chair (50% male compared with 24% female), vice chair (44% male compared with 18% female) and chief executive (26% male compared with 6% female).

Governing bodies were relatively satisfied with the gender balance in their leadership roles although not to the same extent as the clubs were. Just over a quarter (26%) felt very satisfied, with 40% fairly satisfied, 20% fairly unsatisfied and 9% very unsatisfied. The reasons they gave for being satisfied were generally either that the gender balance in leadership roles reflected participation levels or simply that they felt there was a good balance of genders.

Local Authority/Trust Survey

Details on the proportion of local authorities and trusts with coaching staff of either gender holding certain coaching qualifications is noted in the following table. The term 'local authority' is used throughout this section to mean local authorities and trusts.

Local Authority/Trust Survey

Table 7: Gender of specialist coaching staff by qualification of staff (percentage of local authorities)

Qualification level	Local authorities with coaches (N = 16)	Local authorities with male coaches (N = 16)	Local authorities with female coaches (N = 16)
National	50%	50%	25%
Advanced	69%	56%	56%
Club	81%	81%	81%
Introductory	94%	88%	94%
Unqualified	19%	13%	19%
Total	100%	94%	100%

Base: All responding local authorities/trusts with coaching staff

Most local authorities had male and female coaches in roughly equal proportions. The sole exception was the higher proportion with male rather than female national level coaches.

The following table shows the age group which male and female local authority/trust coaches worked with.

Local Authority/Trust Survey

Table 8: Gender of specialist coaching staff by age group coached (percentage of local authorities)

Age group	Total no. of coaches (N = 16)	Male coaches (N = 16)	Female coaches (N = 16)
16 and over	50%	50%	44%
12 – 15	81%	75%	81%
Under 12	81%	81%	75%
Total	100%	94%	100%

Base: Local authorities/trusts with coaching staff

In local authorities, the emphasis was on coaching for the younger age groups, with only half of the local authorities having coaches teaching the over 16 year old age group. A large proportion of authorities (81%) had coaches for under 12s and 12 – 15 year olds. The differences between the percentage of local authorities with male coaches and the percentage with female coaches were fairly small.

Males were found in leadership roles more often than females, particularly for the more senior roles. Many local authorities, however, had female as well as male facility staff (23% with female compared with 27% with male) or facility managers (32% female compared with 36% male), but there tended to be more males overall in leadership roles. Again, this was particularly true of the senior positions, such as director (14% with a female compared with 68% with

a male), head of service (68% male compared with 23% with a female) and chief executive officer (27% compared with 0%).

Most local authorities were satisfied with the existing gender balance in leadership roles, with 22% stating it was very satisfactory and 65% that it was fairly satisfactory. Thirteen percent found it fairly unsatisfactory. Those finding it very or fairly satisfactory considered that there was already a good representation of females or noted that they had an equal opportunities policy in place.

Local Sports Council Survey

Local sports councils tended to employ equal numbers of males and females in voluntary and paid and in full and part-time work. The main leadership roles generally tended to be filled by males rather than females, as shown below.

Local Sports Council Survey

Table 9: Leadership roles in local sports councils (percentage of local sport councils)

Role	Total number	Males	Females
Chair	92%	80%	12%
Vice Chair	92%	64%	32%
Treasurer	84%	68%	16%
Secretary	80%	40%	44%
Administrator	36%	16%	24%
Director/manager/head	8%	8%	8%
Other elected member	64%	60%	44%
Other sports volunteer member	60%	48%	56%
Other education service representative	56%	36%	36%
Other special needs representative	28%	12%	16%
Other representative	52%	40%	32%
Other officer	12%	4%	12%
Others	24%	20%	16%

Base: All local sports council respondents, n=26

Local sports councils were more likely to employ a male than a female in most of the roles, particularly for chairs (80% males compared with 12% females), treasurers (68% compared with 16%) and, to a lesser extent, vice chairs (64% compared with 32%). Females, however, were more likely than males to have the roles of secretaries (44% females, 40% males) and administrators (24% female compared with 16% with a male).

Satisfaction with the gender balance in leadership roles in their organisation was at similar levels to those seen for governing bodies and local authorities, with 23% finding it very satisfactory, 46% fairly satisfactory, 15% fairly unsatisfactory and 8% very unsatisfactory.

University (Sports Science) Survey

The results from the four responding universities are presented in terms of actual numbers of staff rather than the proportion of respondents. Across the universities males were more likely to be found in full-time roles than part-time roles (9 in full-time compared with 4 in part-time), with females less likely to be in full-time roles (6 full-time compared with 11 in part-time roles). Males were particularly likely to hold senior departmental roles, with more male than female (3 compared with 0) directors or heads of department. In sports science roles there was a fairly even gender balance.

Two universities felt their gender balance was satisfactory, noting that appointments were based on ability and that the current structure was working well. The remaining two felt it was unsatisfactory, noting that there are more men than women in science and that few females applied for senior positions.

Institutes of Sport Survey

It should be noted that the results of this survey are reported together although there are differences between the Scottish Institute of Sport and the area institutes. The institutes of sport tended to have roughly equal proportions of males and females in both full and part-time paid roles. In total, 2 males were in full-time roles and 22 in part-time ones, compared with 3 full-time females and 23 part-time ones.

Institutes Survey

Table 10: Composition of institutes coaches by level (number of coaches) including paid and voluntary staff

Coaching staff	Coaches who are Male	Coaches who are Female
Performance Director	1	0
Head Coach	13	2
Coach – assistant/specialist/technical	18	4
Coach – apprentice	1	1
Coach – national	2	0

Base: All institutes that provided details (N = 4)

As shown, there was one male performance director and no female equivalents, with 13 male head coaches (compared with 2 female ones).

Males were also more prevalent in leadership roles in the institutes as a whole, with only one institute having almost as many females (13) as males (17) in leadership roles. Females are less well-represented at each level of leadership in the other institutes. Out of the five institutes, the most senior roles which were held by a female were one chief executive and one area/regional manager. Males were predominant at chair (5 males compared with 0 females), vice-chair (2 males compared with 0 females), and area/regional manager level (7 males compared with 2 females) and in other executive board positions (37 compared with 15).

However, as the following table shows, male and females were both well represented in the area of sports science.

Institutes Survey

Table 11: Composition of institutes sports science staff by level (number of staff)

	Males	Females
Director/Head	6	5
Senior Scientist	48	48
Junior Scientist	24	13
Other roles	6	16

Base: All institutes that provided details (N = 4)

In addition, there were equal proportions of males and females in specifically sports science roles although females were more likely to be physiotherapists (31 females compared with 9 males) and males to be strength and conditioning coaches (18 females compared with 34 males).

All the institutes that replied were fairly satisfied with the balance of gender representation, mainly feeling that there was a good mix or even distribution of males and females in their organisation, although one respondent noted the gender imbalance in coaching.

Overall Satisfaction with Gender Balance in Scottish Sport

All organisations surveyed (sports clubs, local sports councils, sports governing bodies, local authorities/trusts, institutes of sport and universities) were asked their opinion on the gender balance in leadership roles in Scottish sport as a whole.

Table 12: Satisfaction with gender balance in leadership roles in Scotland

	Percentage of respondents (N = 102)
Very satisfactory	8%
Fairly satisfactory	49%
Fairly unsatisfactory	32%
Very unsatisfactory	11%

Base: Total sample (across all surveys)

Almost half of all respondents (49%) felt that they had insufficient knowledge to comment on the gender balance in leadership roles across Scottish sport. Of those that did comment, fifty-seven per cent thought the balance was very or fairly satisfactory and forty-three per cent considered the balance was

not satisfactory. There was little difference between types of organisation.

The main reasons given by the respondents who felt very or fairly satisfied were that they felt a good balance of genders existed or that the gender of leaders reflected participation. Others noted that the current provision worked well or that gender was not an issue.

Most of the respondents who were either very or fairly unsatisfied felt that leadership was male dominated and that more female leaders were needed. Specific mention was made of the need for more females in senior leadership roles and a lack of encouragement or opportunities for females. Some respondents suggested that the lack of females in leadership roles was linked to a lack of females involved in participation.

Commonwealth Games 2002

Information on the gender balance in the Scottish support and management team for the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester is reported in the table on the next page.

The information used here was obtained from the booklet *Bank of Scotland Scottish Team Commonwealth Games 2002*.

Table 13: Composition of Scottish Commonwealth Games Support and Management Team

	Total	Male	Female
Coach	25	23	2
Team manager	17	11	6
Physiotherapist	9	3	6
Head coach	8	8	0
Assistant general team manager	4	3	1
Analyst	3	3	0
Assistant coach	2	1	1
Head of medical services	2	1	1
Medical officer	2	0	2
Head of media	2	0	2
General team manager	1	1	0
Deputy general team manager	1	1	0
Carer- multi-disability	1	1	0
Press officer	1	1	0
Psychologist	1	1	0
Chief de Mission	1	1	0
Mechanic	1	1	0
Office manager	1	0	1
Guide	1	0	1
Head physiotherapist	1	0	1
Total	84	60	24

Out of the 84 individuals with a leadership role, 71% were male and 29% were female.

The females tended to be found in medical roles. In total 42% of the females were in medical roles compared to 12% of males.

The major leadership positions tended to be male. This was especially true of coaching roles, with 23 of the 25 coaches being male and all eight head coaches being male. Team managers also had a male bias, with 11 of the 17 team managers being male.

Scottish Executive Tourism, Culture and Sport Group.

Information has been provided on the basic structure and make-up of the various departments, groups and divisions within the Scottish Executive. In terms of sport, the most important section is the Tourism, Culture and Sport Group, which is positioned within the Education Department.

The following table shows the numbers of males and females in each role in the relevant group, at the time of survey.

Table 14: Composition of the Tourism, Culture and Sport Group

	Total	Male	Female
Head of Tourism, Culture and Sport Group	1	1	0
Head of Sport, the Arts and Culture Division	1	1	0
Head of Sports Policy Unit	1	1	0
Other Sports Policy Unit staff	7	2	5
Personal Secretary/Assistant	2	0	2

The above data shows that the highest positions within the groups were held by males, with the heads of the Tourism, Culture and Sport Group, the Sports, Arts and Culture Division and the Sports Policy Unit all being male. Females were more represented at the lower levels, with five of the seven other workers and both personal secretaries/administrators being female.

sportscotland

Information has been provided on the basic structure and make-up of the various departments, groups and divisions within **sportscotland**.

The table below shows the number of males and females in each of the key leadership roles in **sportscotland**.

sportscotland

Table 15: Composition of sportscotland staff – leadership roles

	Males	Females
Chief Executive	1	0
Directors	3	1
Heads of Department (& other senior management)	18	4
Staff managers	6	6
Team supervisors	4	10
Partnership managers	16	19

The most senior roles (chief executive, director, other senior management) were more likely to be held by males than females. There were more females than males in the less senior leadership roles, namely team supervisors and partnership managers.

As with other organisations who were interviewed, **sportscotland** were asked to say whether they were satisfied or not with the gender balance in their organisation and why. **sportscotland's** reply⁵ is detailed below.

*“**sportscotland** is committed to its Equal Opportunities Employment Policy and to work-life balance. We are committed to achieving and providing equality of opportunity in all aspects of an individual's employment and eliminating discrimination in all its forms. **sportscotland's** Recruitment and Selection Policy is adhered to at all times to ensure best practise is followed and our commitment to equal opportunities is delivered ensuring the best person for the post is recruited. All our posts are advertised on our website, and in the national press. Monitoring of all recruitment and selection is carried out. The Senior Management Team is committed to developing initiatives to attract more females to senior posts as vacancies arise.*

***sportscotland** is committed to exploring and implementing new ways of working and family-friendly policies, and has flexible working hours (at Caledonia House HQ), considers job share opportunities and part-time working and is developing remote working to enable staff to work from both partners' premises and home.”*

Conclusion

The survey shows that there are significant inequalities between males and females in sport leadership positions although most of the organisations surveyed consider the current position to be satisfactory. This may suggest a degree of complacency among organisations where males tend to dominate leadership positions.

This research is intended to provide a baseline for monitoring change over time and will be a useful reference point for those organisations in other parts of the UK who are considering undertaking similar research.

Further Developments

sportscotland is liaising with the Women's Sport Foundation with a view to creating a post devoted to the development of women's sport in Scotland.

⁵ Provided by the Human Resources team at **sportscotland**