



WELCOME TO OUR W&G Newsletter



Welcome to our Bay of Plenty Women and Girls Network Newsletter. In this update Rachel Gwerder from Tauranga City Basketball Association shares how TCBA support their female coaches to thrive. We hear about BOP District Rugby League's delivery of Kia Paea Ake, a programme for kotiro to build confidence, learn about their bodies, build friendships and develop skills to thrive in rugby league. In May we have Dr Julia Casadio, High Performance Sport physiologist and applied researcher coming to the BOP to deliver a coachforce workshop and a parent athlete evening for athletes and parents. (more details below).



Latest Updates

HOW TAURANGA CITY BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS FEMALE COACHES TO THRIVE

Within the dynamic organisation of Tauranga City Basketball Association (TCBA), 63 coaches lead 34 teams. With 20 of these coaches being female, a quiet revolution is underway. Female coaches are not just present; they are leveraging off their unique skills and experiences to make a difference. These women hold lead coaching roles for many of TCBA's most competitive teams. Complemented by a strong cohort of female assistant coaches, their impact is seen through every level of the coaching structure. The driving factors behind the supportive environment in which they can thrive can be seen below.



PROUD VISIBILITY

Female coaches are given high profile within their community, reinforcing their presence and value



CELEBRATION OF SOFT SKILLS

Leadership, communication, and empathy are recognized as being on par with technical and tactical knowledge.



A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

A supportive atmosphere is maintained, with Rachel serving as a direct channel for immediate support.



STORYTELLING & SHARED EXPERIENCES

Coaches are encouraged to share their journeys, fostering connection and inspiration



CHALLENGING GROWTH

Coaches are continually challenged in both soft and technical skills to ensure ongoing development.



THE POWER OF LANGUAGE:

Female coaches are addressed as "Coach [Name]," reinforcing respect and authority.



OPTIMAL TEAM STRUCTURES

Coaching teams, including head coaches, assistants, and managers, are built for best fit and progression.



WOMEN ONLY COACHING GROUPS:

If needed, small groups are formed to create a safe space for female coaches to support one another.



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Achievements are acknowledged and celebrated as a group, fostering a strong sense of community and accomplishment.



The role of male allies

One of TCBA's greatest successes has been the support of male allies within the organisation. Rachel shares her key tips (below) for males to be effective and empowering allies, ensuring their actions contribute to a more inclusive and equitable environment for female coaches to thrive.



1.BE WELCOMING & INCLUSIVE

02.BE SUPPORTIVE

If you see a female coach in a challenging situation, stand by her and provide support afterwards

03.BE HONEST

Acknowledge uncertainties rather than masking them with overconfidence, which can be intimidating.

04.USE ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

Avoid overly technical terminology that could be intimidating.

05.SHARE YOUR RESPECT/MANA

Demonstrating genuine respect for female coaches elevates their standing in the eyes of others

06.BE A DISCUSSION RESOURCE, NOT THE EXPERT

Encourage open dialogue rather than providing all the answers.

07.RESPECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Recognise that any success a woman has had in basketball, no matter the level, is a testament to her skills and perseverance.

08.CHALLENGE NEGATIVE NARRATIVES

Replace dismissive language ie "shes a bossy ..." with empowering phrases ie: "she is a strong leader"

09.BE PROACTIVE IN DRIVING CHANGE

Don't settle for the status quo, - be a part of the solution



Kia Puea Ake

This April, Bay of Plenty District Rugby League delivered Kia Puea Ake – a powerful wānanga designed to uplift and encourage our kōtiro through mātauranga and activation both on and off the field. We caught up with Rugby League’s coachforce development officer Anahera Parata, one of the key drivers behind this kaupapa, to hear more about the impact of the event.

What was the main kaupapa or vision driving this camp?

“The main vision was to uplift and encourage our kōtiro through mātauranga and activation – both on and off the field.”

Why did you feel it was important to create a dedicated space for wāhine in league?

“We’ve seen exponential growth in our game, particularly in the female space. As that space grows, the need to support our wāhine is more important than ever.

NZRL launched an amazing initiative this year called Sister Rise, aimed at older girls playing at district or zone level. To me, Kia Puea Ake is like the baby sister kaupapa – dedicated to our kōtiro at club level, helping to better prepare them for the Sister Rise pathway.”

What kind of growth or transformation did you notice in the girls who took part?

“The most significant transformation I saw was the camaraderie. We started the wānanga with girls sitting in their club groups, not wanting to mix. By the end, they’d formed new friendships. That’s a huge win in my books.”

Why are initiatives like Kia Puea Ake important for the future of women’s sport – especially in league?

“Kaupapa like Kia Puea Ake speak for themselves. Often, the female space is overlooked until players reach elite levels. But how many more Kiwi Ferns could come out of Bay of Plenty if we just add a little more support at the very start?”

What was your highlight of the event?

“My highlight was watching our kōtiro support each other. We had varying skill levels, and the way they helped one another throughout the programme was very special to witness.”

“This was a huge team effort. Although my team at NZRL helped immensely, I didn’t rely solely on our code. So to anyone looking to run a kaupapa like Kia Puea Ake – don’t limit yourself. Collaboration is key.”

Upcoming

EMPOWER HER

21 May 6:30 - 8pm Tauranga (Venue TBC)



The poster for the 'EMPOWER HER' event features a teal and blue background with a faint image of a female athlete. At the top left is the 'X' logo for Her Strength. The text 'SPORT BOP & HER STRENGTH PRESENT' is in white. The main title 'EMPOWER HER' is in large white letters, with 'PARENT ATHLETE EDUCATION EVENING' in smaller white text to the right. A circular photo of Dr. Julia Casadio is positioned to the left of the title. Two key questions are highlighted in white text: 'Do you know why it is normal for your performance to plateau during adolescence?' and 'Do you know how the changes that occur during adolescence can impact training?'. A paragraph of text describes the event's focus on supporting young women through adolescence. The date 'MAY 21' is prominently displayed in large white letters, followed by 'TAURANGA (VENUE TBC)' and '6:30 - 8PM'. Registration information is provided at the bottom, including a QR code and the website 'SPORTBOP.CO.NZ'. A quote from Luuka Jones is also included.

SPORT BOP & HER STRENGTH PRESENT

EMPOWER HER PARENT ATHLETE EDUCATION EVENING

Do you know why it is normal for your performance to plateau during adolescence?

Do you know how the changes that occur during adolescence can impact training?

Sport Bay of Plenty invites parents and athletes to an evening focused on supporting young women through their adolescent years in sport. Delivered by Dr Julia Casadio, High Performance Sport Physiologist and applied researcher, the evening will unpack the physical and nutritional considerations for athletes navigating puberty and explore how changes in adolescence can influence a young female's experience in sport. With an emphasis on education and empowerment, Dr Casadio will share practical insights to help parents and athletes better understand the female body during this critical stage. The evening will reinforce the importance of putting health before performance, with the goal of keeping more girls active, confident, and engaged in sport for longer.

MAY 21
TAURANGA (VENUE TBC)
6:30 - 8PM

REGISTER VIA QR CODE OR VISIT [SPORTBOP.CO.NZ](https://sportbop.co.nz)

"Collaborating with Dr. Julia for 8+ years at High Performance Sport NZ, I know first hand the value of her expertise. 'Empower Her' will share the female-specific knowledge I wish I had as a young athlete - crucial for both athletes and parents to understand and navigate these pivotal years in sport with greater compassion." Luuka Jones, Olympic Medallist, Canoe Slalom

Sport Bay of Plenty invites parents and athletes to an evening focused on supporting young females through the adolescent years in sport delivered by Dr Julia Casadio, High Performance Sport Physiologist and founder of Her Strength. This session will unpack the physiological and nutritional considerations for athletes navigating puberty and explore how changes in adolescence can influence a young female's experience in sport and physical activity.

With an emphasis on education and empowerment, Dr Casadio will share practical insights to help parents and athletes better understand the female body during this critical stage. The evening will also reinforce the importance of putting health before performance, with the goal of keeping more girls active, confident, and engaged in sport for longer.

if you have any questions regarding this newsletter or would like to get in touch to share stories or insights from your work, please get in touch! luukaj@sportbop.co.nz