



Tucker Center

for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Report and Evaluation for the Women Coaches Symposium 2017

Fourth Annual
 Women Coaches Symposium
 Organized by the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport
 in the School of Kinesiology at the University of Minnesota,
 in partnership with
 Gopher Athletics and the Alliance of Women Coaches
 Friday, April 21, 2017
 TCF Bank Stadium, DQ Club Room, University of Minnesota

The purpose of the **Women Coaches Symposium (WCS)** is to provide high quality educational programming and professional development, an avenue for networking for women, a space to build community among women coaches, and a way to increase and retain women in the coaching profession. Women coaches of all sports and all levels are welcome.

The 2017 Women Coaches Symposium was an **overwhelming success** with 97% of attendees reporting that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they enjoyed the symposium. Symposium attendance continued to grow rapidly to 350 women and a few male allies from all sports and all levels of competition. Nearly 40% of attendees have returned to the WCS annually.

Year	Number of Registrants	Percent of Returning Registrants
2017	350	38%
2016	240	39%
2015	170	30%
2014	120	NA

Almost all participants (97%) would recommend that a colleague attend, nearly everyone (97%) indicated that the WCS is a unique professional development opportunity, and over 95% of participants stated they would attend the WCS in future. Coupled with the fact the WCS sold out several weeks in advance, this feedback clearly indicates the event is popular, necessary, and in demand. The scope, size, and value of the event, quality of our speakers—all of whom are women, relevancy of topics, high-level partnerships, and especially the women-centered focus of the WCS distinguishes it from other events in the landscape of coaching education. To our knowledge, it is the largest event of its kind in the United States, and perhaps the world.



WCS Attendees during Welcome Address

Strong support and collaborative partnerships with regional college conferences this year as evidenced by attendance of conference commissioners and coaches from the MIAC, NSIC, and UMAC.

This year the WCS also had the highest number of **vendors** to date. Ten vendors shared their expertise, services, and took the opportunity to network with coaches, including:



Alliance of Women Coaches



Minnesota United FC



TRIA Orthopaedic Center



Ann Bancroft Foundation



ORTHODOGY
physical wellness

Orthology



The Tucker Center



Busy Coach (Mandy Green)



Positive Coaching Alliance



Underground Printing



LOLE Twin Cities



Shelly Bean
the Sports Queen



Women's Sports Foundation

The symposium opened with a welcome from Directors from each of the events' main sponsors— **Julie Manning** of Gopher Athletics, **Megan Kahn** from the Alliance of Women Coaches, and **Nicole M. LaVoi** of the Tucker Center. The morning included talks by **Jenny Evans** (CEO of PowerHouse Performance), who gave a session on resilience, stress, and performance; a workshop on creating cultural competencies in coaching; and a screening of *Sporting Chance: The Lasting Legacy of Title IX*, led by **Dr. JoAnn Buysse**. **Dr. Carlin Anderson** (Consultant for Premier Sport Psychology) spoke on athlete mental health and well-being and **Dr. LaVoi** presented “Beyond the Paradox for Women Coaches: High Five, Survive & Thrive!”



Dr. Nicole M. LaVoi



Jean K. Freeman

The fourth annual **Jean K. Freeman** keynote was a big success! Jean served for 31 years as the women's swimming and diving head coach for the Gophers from 1973-2004, before passing away in 2010 from cancer. Freeman was a highly successful coach, cared deeply about her athletes, and was beloved by all. The goal of the Jean K. Freeman keynote is to bring in a highly successful, high profile female coach who reflects the same values and commitment to striving for excellence while maintaining good sportsmanship. This keynote increases the visibility, marketability and national reputation of the WCS.

Head Women's Swimming Coach for the Gophers and former Hall of Fame Gopher swimmer, **Terry Ganely** made remarks about the impact Jean made on athletes, the swimming world, and coaches.

The Jean K. Freeman Keynote Speaker this year was **Jill Ellis**. Ellis is the Head Coach of the United States Women's National Soccer Team and a development director for the United States Soccer Federation, overseeing the national youth teams' development program. Ellis has led the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team as head coach since 2014. In 2015, she guided the team to its first World Cup victory since 1999, and in January 2016, she was named FIFA Women's World Coach of the Year. Her keynote titled “Living in the Spaces” was the hit of the WCS with almost all coaches citing it as the best part of the symposium.



Jill Ellis

After lunch a panel titled “Learning from Championship Coaches” convened and five women coaches from all levels of competition provided insights from their unique perspectives. **Dr. LaVoi** and **Kari Ornes** shared tips on engaging with sport parents and **Dr. Cindra Kamphoff** wrapped up the day with her lively talk on developing grit.

In our post-event evaluation, we asked coaches *what they liked best*. Feedback included:

- *We are lucky to be supported by the Tucker Center and have it in our back yard. It was great to hear Jill Ellis speak about the importance of roles people play on a team. I liked hearing about Background Anger from Dr. LaVoi.*
- *Being with a room full of people who "get me", who look like me, and who appreciate what I have to say.*

- *The speakers were really great. It was awesome to have them all be female so they could also relate. I truly enjoyed listening to Jill Ellis as I am a soccer coach but the others brought great ideas and "aha" moments for me too. I also got to hang out with a former player attending the symposium too... so that was pretty cool!!!*
- *I liked being in the same room with some many interesting, smart, engaged women! I loved Jill Ellis's talk and I loved the diversity and inclusion workshop.*
- *Variety of speakers, variety of levels and sports welcomed at the symposium (didn't feel like it was geared just for high performance / elite athletes and no assumptions that everyone wants to coach at that level).*
- *Listening to Beth Wilmeth's comments during the panel, particularly on her team values and the ways she humbly leads a team culture of excellence and integrity. Recognition that my value as a coach is not in how many tasks I complete, but in the model that I live moment by moment. Taking care of my own needs as a person and athlete does more to build a culture around the qualities that will make our team a healthy and successful environment than any checklist I feel pressured to accomplish.*
- *As a young assistant coach and recent graduate, I felt incredibly supported by the more experienced coaches and was grateful to hear their stories and wisdom.*

Many attendees emailed us their unsolicited thoughts about their experience at the WCS. A snapshot of their feedback includes:

- *Fabulous job on your conference. Great attendance and interaction. I thought Jill Ellis was great too! Thanks for your work on behalf of coaches...especially women.*
- *HERE'S A HUGE THANK YOU! Tri-fold in gratitude thank you for today. I heard a lot of what I needed to hear at the right moment. I know you had all those speakers there for a reason! So thanks! Also thank you for caring so passionately about what feels like everything but especially giving back to us young folk :)*
- *I wanted to let you know that I was very impressed by the quality of the speakers, the venue, how many coaches were in attendance, the amount of networking that went on, and I appreciated how organized it was :) I believe this event provided a ton of valuable information.*
- *Thank you so much for all of your hard work in putting together the 4th annual WCS conference last Friday. This was my first coaching conference, so I was unsure of what to expect. The speakers were engaging, the topics were interesting, and the event seemed to run extremely smoothly thanks to you and your great support team! As a senior athlete, sports have always been a large part of my life. I am grateful for the coaches that invested their time in me and served as positive role models during my youth. I had not really considered coaching as part of my career path after school, but the WCS has sparked new interest for me. I feel a new sense of responsibility to positively impact women in soccer as my coaches did for me. Thank you again for your continued tireless effort not only for the WCS, but in the Tucker Center. I appreciate your dedication.*
- *Thank you for all the work & planning you put in to hosting another incredible Women's Coaches Symposium. I can distinctly remember different pieces I've learned from each event I've been able to attend. This has been very timely for me as I have been considering whether or not to continue coaching. I was challenged at the WCS with my "why" and being committed to work through the fog.*
- *Thank you for the work you do and the effort it takes to get such a large group of women coaches together. I brought our first year assistant women's basketball coach with me on Friday (she's the only other woman in our department). I know it was just one day in her life, but it made a huge impact!*

