

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

12.2.08

Spike Milligan's email last week on the differences he noticed when coaching men and women has brought a response from Jonathan Griffin in the USA.

“Having coached men's and women's teams extensively in both the UK and USA (Blackheath WRFC (UK), Loughborough University Women (UK) and Stanford University Women (USA), plus representative teams in both the UK and USA), it is clear there is a difference in approach required to maximize the learning and enjoyment from the players. I by no means wish to suggest that I get it right nearly enough, but being aware of the differences has certainly made me a more effective coach. I would encourage all coaches to give it a try. You will immediately gain a greater understanding of you strengths and weakness as a 'coach'.

Spike Milligan's follow up article in my opinion is correct in everything stated.

I would like to offer the following suggestions to add to Spike Milligan's observations:

1. Men are most definitely from Mars and Women most definitely from Venus, not any more so then when on a practice field. They must be coached differently; where language is used, it is used differently; pitch of voice is different; dynamic of the drills/activities/games are different; emphasis on teaching points are different. This is simply because women's and men's motivation to play is generally very different.
2. I believe that every coach should have a copy of the following book. 'Gender and Competition: How Men And Women Approach Work And Play Differently,' written by Kathleen J. Deboer (see Amazon, cost: US\$14). I have found the following diagram from the book very useful as a summary of how to approach the coaching of the two sexes.

Women: accepted--> train --> compete
Men: train --> compete --> accepted'

Are there other coaches out there with views on this topic? Just email any response to keithrichardson@therfu.com and it has a very good chance of being printed if it adds to the debate.

Keith Richardson (Editor).