

Coaching Female Triathletes

Curriculum Document
January 2022

Introduction

The number of female triathletes has increased significantly in recent years. This growth in female participation in triathlon has led to coaches developing a greater understanding of how to coach female triathletes appropriately. Female athletes can gain significant health benefits from triathlon participation at all levels, from recreational to elite. The anatomical, physiological and endocrine differences between male and female athletes make evidence of the need to properly understand how to improve a female's athletic performance. Moreover, the failure of male coaches to understand how best to engage with female athletes has been identified as a major impediment to participation, engagement, and progression within the sport.

The following course is aimed to provide fundamental information on female-specific issues such as physiology, psychology, the trends in female injuries, and strategies to encourage and strengthen the safe participation of women in triathlon.

Overview

Coaches working with female athletes' need to individualise and tailor-make their training throughout the prescription and implementation of strength and conditioning programs. To support the health and well-being of female athletes, coaches must comprehend female-specific topics such as the menstrual cycle, breast health, female psychology, and trends in female injuries, meaning that coaches must be able to train female athletes differently from males.

Learning outcomes

This course provides essential and valuable practical sports science information that provides coaches working with female triathletes with scientific-based information to successfully develop their sport potential while minimising the risk of injury, overtraining and lowering the dropout rate in triathlon. Furthermore, the course aims to improve participants' knowledge of key aspects relevant to healthy female triathlete participation and promote safe participation for female athletes in triathlon

Content

The content of the program is summarised in the following sections:

- **Physiology of the female athlete**

This module focuses on the differences in female anatomy and physiology, as well as the essential concepts that explain why it's important to coach female athletes differently.

- **Menstrual cycle and training**

This module explains how the menstrual cycle can be used as a training tool in conjunction with personal characteristics.

- **The effect of the menstrual cycle on exercise metabolism**

The effects of the menstrual cycle on exercise metabolism are covered in detail in this section. In naturally cycling eumenorrhoeic women, the female hormones oestrogen and progesterone fluctuate regularly during the menstrual cycle. These hormones regulate a variety of physiological systems in addition to reproductive function, and their action during exercise may have implications for exercise performance.

- **The female athlete triad**

The female athlete triad is a potentially life-threatening illness that affects a large number of young women. Low bone density is a hazardous side effect of the triad, and the degree of low BMD in young patients is highly dependent on the age at which amenorrhea began and the length of time it lasted. Menstrual function and bone health are both affected by low energy availability. There are a number of different theories regarding how to best treat this difficult issue.

- **Empowering female athletes**

This module will look for ways to empower all women via sport, as well as discuss ideas for preventing and treating concerns unique to female athletes.

We will also discuss strategies to lower drop-out rates in female athletes. It's not uncommon for teenagers to drop out of sports. Statistics reveal the high number of great young people who drop out too soon, due to the demands of puberty and exams, as well as injuries and other hobbies. In any sport, dropout rates rise during adolescence and the difficult transition from junior to senior age groups.

- **Considerations for coaching the female athlete**

While many coaching tactics are beneficial for both boys and girls, there are significant biological and psychological variations between the two genders that necessitate specific coaching approaches. A successful sports coach must possess a diverse set of skills. Each athlete is a one-of-a-kind individual who stands out from the crowd. Certain skills, on the other hand, can be identified as distinguishing characteristics of good professionals. This module will go over these distinctions and offer practical ways to help you, as a coach, enable your female athletes to achieve their psychological, social, and physical potential.

- **Training female athletes**

Coaches must be aware of the disparities in maturation rates between female and male athletes, as well as how these variances affect their training and performance in a variety of ways. Rather of focusing on an athlete's chronological age, coaches must consider their specific growth.

- **Race preparation**

The female triathlete's race preparation is a one-of-a-kind experience. When it comes to training for and competing in triathlons, they each have their own set of motivators and hurdles to conquer. This section focuses on how to create a pre-race strategy for maintaining consistency in the days leading up to an event as well as on race day.

- **Safeguarding**

It is vital for coaches to be aware of all forms of abuse and also to be perfectly clear with World Triathlon's approach to Safeguarding and with the guidelines and regulations that are in place in this respect. High standards of behaviour and practice are demanded by all coaches who are associated with World Triathlon in any possible way.

Supporting Resources

The content is supported by the [World Triathlon Education & Knowledge Hub](#), which contains different information required to establish a successful training program. With all the content provided, coaches should be able to develop their coaching knowledge and skills and design a tailored training program for their athletes.

For more details please contact World Triathlon Development at development@triathlon.org.

Key Speakers

- **Kristina Skroce (CRO)**

Kristina holds a bachelor's degree in sports science. She studied at Verona University, where she continues to work in the endurance centre and human performance laboratory.

She is currently pursuing a PhD in Biomedicine with a focus on Sports Medicine, where she is researching the time course of adaptations to endurance exercise.

She is a member of the Supersapiens Science Team, which assists elite athletes and the Supersapiens Science Team in learning and conducting research investigations in both the field and the lab. She served as a performance coach with Squad Novo Nordisk for five years, as well as with the Croatian triathlon team.

She has spent the last eight years working with a variety of professional endurance athletes.

- **Holly Benner (USA)**

Holly Benner (USA) Trained as an Industrial-Organizational Psychologist, she has learned the drivers behind human behavior and motivation. As an athlete, she has reached national and world-level performance in swimming, rowing, and triathlon. She had the unique pleasure of racing as a Professional Triathlete over the past five years, retiring in April of this year. Her passion for coaching others to achieve their own breakthrough performance has led her to start her own small business, where she has the honor to guide others on their own path of peak performance and self-discovery.

- **Irina Zelenkova (RUS)**

MD, PhD, IOC Diploma Sport physician

She has over 10 years of experience working in the field of professional sports. Main specialisation is the detailed support of athlete and team preparation, often with deep complexity. This includes the highest level competitions (World Championships, World Cup Stages, and Olympic Games). The main focus of the work is to improve the performance of athletes using innovative technologies without the use of prohibited substances and methods. Additionally she has competence in management and work within multidisciplinary teams and integrated IT projects. Multi-tasking, decision-making and prioritisation capabilities. Available for lectures and master classes on sports medicine, innovative recovery & training methodologies, and physiology.

- **Sonia Conde Alonso (ESP)**

Dr. of Exercise Physiology, Bachelor of Sports and Nursing, and Nutrition and Dietetics Specialist. During her PhD in Switzerland, she spent the last eight years working in research; the first five years were spent in a metabolism lab studying insulin resistance and muscle insulin sensitivity through exercise. The study of the mechanisms involved in the regulation of the kinetics of O₂ consumption during exercise has occupied the last three years. Sonia is currently managing the research arm of a groundbreaking unit in Spain that focuses on physical exercise and nutritional education for cancer patients. Since 2015, she has been competing in triathlons of all distances, savoring the long distance to the fullest, and consciously reaping all of the sport's health benefits.

- **Vanessa Huesa (ESP)**

Vanessa Huesa is president of the Valencia Triathlon Federation (FTCV) since 2020. She also serves on the boards of the Spanish Triathlon Federation - FETRI and the Equality Commission. Since 2007, Vanessa has operated as the Technical Director of FTCV.

She has a Bachelor's degree in Sport Science and Physiotherapy and is a Level 3 Triathlon Coach. Vanessa is currently the coordinator and coach for FTCV Development initiatives including "Programa de Tecnificación" and "Planes de Especialización Deportiva de Cheste." and an active athlete.

- **Silvia Vieito (ESP)**

I have worked as a journalist in a local radio station since 2009, first in Ferrol and currently in Pontevedra, Spain, covering Sports, Politics and other local news.

Javi Gómez Noya was the reason why I became interested in triathlon and, in 2011, I joined the board of Club Triatlón Ferrol and I worked as a volunteer in the press department of the European Championships hosted in Pontevedra.

I also worked for the Galician Triathlon Federation, for the clubs Cidade de Lugo Fluvial e Inforhouse de Santiago. In addition, I created and edited a regional magazine specialized in triathlon ('Revista Tríptica') and I was the presenter in some Spanish and World Triathlon events (such as Duathlon World Championships Pontevedra 2014, Multisports World Championships Pontevedra 2019 or World Triathlon Para Cup A Coruña 2021).

During all my career I have tried to give women an equal covering on the news and competitions. With the aim of learning how to deal with discrimination, I attended the History of Feminist Theory certificate by Universidad de A Coruña in 2021 and I am part of an association of feminist journalists 'Xornalistas Galegas'.

Project lead: Vicent Beltran (ESP), World Triathlon Coach Facilitator

Dates

Registration period: 28 January - 4 February

Pre-course activities: Starting from 10 February

Welcome webinar: 17 February

Key webinars: 24 February, 3, 10 and 17 March

Closing webinar: 24 March

Languages: English (morning session) and Spanish (evening session)

Schedule

Registration opens	28 January, 2022		
Registration Deadline	4 February, 2022		
Pre-course activities	Starting on 10 February		
Session dates and times		English	Spanish
Welcome Webinar	17 February	9:00 am CET	20:00 CET
Key webinar 1	24 February	9:00 am CET Physiology of the female athlete Key Speaker: Irina Zelenkova (RUS)	20:00 CET The effect of the menstrual cycle on exercise metabolism Key Speaker: Sonia Conde Alonso (ESP)
Key webinar 2	3 March	9:00 am CET Menstrual cycle and training Key Speaker: Kristina Skroce (CRO)	20:00 CET The role of the coach Key Speaker: Vanessa Huesa (ESP)
Key webinar 3	10 March	9:00 am CET Coaching female athletes Key Speaker: Holly Benner (USA)	20:00 CET Empowering female athletes Key Speaker: Silvia Vieito (ESP)
Key webinar 4	17 March	9:00 am CET Round table and open discussion: Moderator: Vicent Beltran	20:00 CET Round table and open discussion Moderator: Vicent Beltran
Closing Webinar	24 March	9:00 am CET	20:00 CET

Target Audience

The course mainly aims for coaches of emerging National Federations and provides an introductory level presentation of the topics listed under “Content”.

Application Criteria

- World Triathlon Certified Coaches can self-enrol to the course through [the Education & Knowledge HUB](#).
- Individuals with no World Triathlon coaching certification are also welcome, they are required to fill in a [registration form](#) with their personal details and confirm their availability on key webinar dates. These participants will be given access to the Education & Knowledge HUB based on their registrations.

Selection Criteria

- In line with the importance of the subject and the introductory level of discussing its topics, there is no selection criteria, the course is open to all audiences.

Maximum number of participants

- The upper limit of participation is 1000 attendees of Zoom webinars.

Requirements:

World Triathlon will provide attendance certificates to course participants, who:

- read all the content on the Education & Knowledge HUB,
- attend at least 3 out of the 4 key webinars,
- and successfully complete checking of knowledge tasks or activities.

Missing any of the above criteria is an obstacle for getting an attendance certificate. The course will be closed on March 25, 2022 at midnight (CET). Any tasks should be completed by then. We have zero tolerance to any delay.