

# COACH IN THE CORNER

WOMEN IN SPORT EDITION-INTERVIEW SERIES



*Women in Sport Edition*



SPÓRT ÉIREANN  
SPORT IRELAND



# Lisa Dixon-Le Chéile AC

**Events:** Multi including sprints, jumps, endurance & a bit of throws

*Coach in the Corner- The Women in Sport Edition* aims to recognise the contribution, commitment and dedication of some of our female role models and leaders. The unparalleled commitment given by these women must be recognised and celebrated, because without them, we would have no athletics. Over the next number of weeks, we will showcase some of the most influential coaches who have made enormous impacts on their local, provincial and national communities.

We hope this interview series will encourage more females to get involved, create an understanding of the pathways that exist for personal development and highlight the opportunities the sport can give us!

## **How did you get involved in athletics?**

I used to compete in athletics when I was in secondary school, mainly sprints & throws (it depended on where you were needed for the school team back in the very old days!) When I had my daughter Erica, she joined a local athletic club, Celbridge AC and they were looking for parents to assist with coaching and I volunteered. I became involved 22 years ago and I haven't looked back since!





## Who or what has helped you as a coach?

When I became involved in County Athletics & provincial athletics it was as an opportunity to talk to other coaches in clubs outside of the club I was with, you could seek advice or discuss particular aspects of what's working in your training group or indeed what was not working and come up with different ideas for training etc.

I found workshops a useful tool and I attended as many as I could in every event to gain knowledge. Our county organises workshops every year, these are very helpful to all coaches in the sport. I became involved with the provincial and national endurance squad a number of years ago, working with Annette Quegan, Fintan Reilly, Niamh & Noel Richardson & Ian O'Reilly. The workshops that are put on for coaches at this level is a great benefit not only to me but the athletes that I am involved with. Steve Macklin was a great sounding board as Junior Endurance lead in the run up to the European Juniors in 2017.



Last year I found the HP high Jump project organised by Dave Sweeney was of great benefit and it has been a great experience to be mentored by Fuzz Cann, it's the fine tuning of skills that you already have that makes the difference with the athlete and their progress. The same goes for the sprints programme in the AAI. I found John Shephard's YouTube workshops very useful for sprints & long jumps. There are endless resources available to coaches online you just need to be able to filter out the clutter!



## What is your coaching philosophy?

I believe in nurturing athletes, athletes need to be exposed to different events at a young age, before they specialise in their mid to late-teens. Coaches need to know their athletes.

Inclusion – everyone needs to feel valued regardless of talent or ability. A training schedule that suits one may not suit all so that's when knowing the athlete comes into play. A good two-way relationship is required particularly as the athlete transitions from juvenile to senior. It's good when the athlete or training group question your plan as it often leads to great discussion. Competition day is not the day to tell the athlete what's expected of them, its also not the time to dissect what went wrong in a race...



In order to move forward you have to look back and see what worked in training and what didn't. Rest is equally as important as training! Finally, I think self-belief is important, it took me a long time to realise that!

# Advice for newcomers..

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Don't be afraid to get involved, ask lots of questions, coaches are always ready to help other coaches. You don't have to come from a background of sport or athletics to be a coach. Little athletics is a great way to start and clubs are always looking for volunteers to help out.

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### What keeps you involved in athletics ?

I really enjoy coaching, the athletes are great to be around, I think they like to be around me too...

I love the sport and you don't know when someone new joins what they will accomplish or bring to the training group. Grassroots athletics is important to me.

I love to travel so I have really enjoyed travelling to various athletic competitions over the many years I have been coaching.

### Any stand out coaching highlights or memories ?

think if the athletes turns around and thanks you it's always a memorable experience. Warm Weather Training with my group in January 2019 was really memorable, it was a first for me, full of hard work, team building, new skills and lots of laughs. Definitely one to be repeated!

There are two events that I was really proud to be part of, being selected as a team manager for the Irish Celtic Cross Country Team in 2018. It was great to work alongside Teresa McDaid, Matt Lockett & Annette Quegan, the athletes were fantastic so gracious and thankful of the support that was provided over the weekend.

The second is being team manager along with Fintan Reilly for the Irish Team at the CSIT games held in Spain in July 2019 It was such a fantastic experience, 5 very long days of competition, 12 athletes ranging in ages 17 – 20yrs from all over Leinster. Some achieved PB's all brought home medals, they had huge support from their families and to stand behind the Irish Flag at the opening ceremony is a memory I will cherish forever.





# The Importance of female coaches

*I believe female coaches bring patience and understanding to coaching. I believe they bring an openness to the Coach /Athlete relationship which is really important.*

*Female coaches can bring a balance to clubs that have been previously male dominated and don't forget we are great organisers and multitaskers!!*



If you would like to highlight any of your female coaches as role models for this interview series, please contact [lillyannohora@athleticsireland.ie](mailto:lillyannohora@athleticsireland.ie)