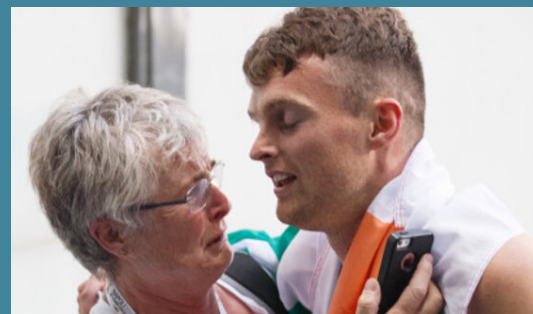


COACH IN THE CORNER

WOMEN IN SPORT EDITION-INTERVIEW SERIES



Women in Sport Edition



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND



Phil Roche- Dooneen AC

Events: Every event but especially sprints, hurdles and relays to the U/12's and upwards.

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 have been involved in Dooneen Athletic Club since my own children joined the club in the 1990's. When they got involved I started helping out from time to time. Before very long I found that I was involved in training a few evenings per week and also in a session in Cratloe on a Sunday morning so in a way you could say that I am "an accidental coach" The late Gerry Burke was the main coach in the club at the time and I got great encouragement from him. He had a wealth of knowledge on athletics in general and in particular in his specialist event which was the high and long jump. Gerry's enthusiasm was infectious and he encouraged me to start taking part in various coaching courses which I did and gained a level 3 coaching qualification. These coaching courses gave me the confidence to continue coaching with the club at a time when the majority of coaches were male.



Who or what has helped you as a coach?

Down through the years I have continued to upskill and attend workshops etc. but during this time I have learned much from all the coaches in the club. John Sheehan has always been the expert to advise on throws and jumps while Liam O Hora will always pass on his expert knowledge on the intricacies of the hurdles while Joe Chawke has years of experience at middle distance and is always helpful to other coaches. There is a great spirit of camaraderie in the club and we all continue to learn from each other. We now find that the majority of the coaches in the club are female.



What is your coaching philosophy?

My coaching philosophy is simple and I think that the children must enjoy the sport if they are going to continue. All the athletes should be exposed to various events and as they all mature at different ages the average athlete at the younger age can turn out to be the star at an older age. I always try to be fair to all athletes but sometimes difficult decisions have to be made when relay team members have to be selected. Athletes must be motivated to achieve improvement in their performance, stay positive and deal with all the barriers and challenges that they face on the way.



Any stand out coaching highlights or memories ?

There have been so many highlights in my years of coaching that it is difficult to select just one. A major highlight was being selected for and winning National Coach of the year but equally it could be seeing the individual that has just won their first National Medal, the relay team that have just qualified for Mosney or won a medal in Mosney (showing my age), the u/8 that has just finished their first race and are trying to spot their parents in the crowd or the international athlete getting their first set of international gear.



What keeps you involved in athletics ?

I continue to coach at Dooneen Athletic Club as it is a wonderful club with very supportive coaches and athletes. I enjoy coaching the athletes and enjoy seeing them progress in their chosen event. I also enjoy learning from other coaches and hope to improve my coaching skills. I always believe in the athletes, I love to see them reach their full potential but even if they don't all continue with the sport, because of exams or for various other reasons they learn numerous lessons not just for the sport but for life itself which can be just as beneficial and should not be overlooked.

“Advice for newcomers..

It takes a number of years to build up coaching skills and we learn from each other every day, so the creation of a network of coaches and coaching should be encouraged. Continue to up-skill, learn from other coaches!

There is a great spirit of camaraderie in the club and we all continue to learn from each other

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The Importance of female coaches

Sometimes I feel that females can often have an advantage in coaching especially to teenage athletes and female athletes.

Coaches have a major impact on their athletes and as female coaches we have different life experiences and qualities and are sometimes better placed to understand the psychological and social pressures that female athletes in particular may experience.

Female coaches should be allowed to focus on coaching as sometimes they are expected to take on numerous other roles simply because of their gender

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