



Interview for the SheCOACH project

February 2025

## Shaping the Future of Basketball: Greek Coach Stella Kaltsidou on Empowerment, Equality, and Leadership

### **Stella Kaltsidou**

*Graduate of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, certified FIBA basketball coach, Coach of the Year in Great Britain for the 2024 season, European Cup winner with the London Lions, and with a résumé full of distinctions and titles.*

*Stella Kaltsidou was born in Thessaloniki on January 12, 1983. Her coaching career began in 2019 with the men's team of Maroussi, working alongside Giorgos Skarfigkas.*

*She then took over EFAOZ in the Greek Women's A1 League. She worked with Martins Zibarts at Olympiacos during the 2021-22 season and, in February 2023, took charge of the London Lions. She led the team to two consecutive domestic doubles and a FIBA EuroCup title -the first English basketball team to achieve such success. She was named Coach of the Year in Great Britain for the 2023-24 season but departed following the team's dissolution due to financial reasons.*

*Alongside her club commitments, she has been an assistant coach to Georgios Dikaioulakos with the Slovenian national team since October 2021.*

*On November 28, 2024, she was appointed head coach of Athinaikos BC (Women's A1 Division, Greece).*



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### **How can gender equality be promoted?**

Promoting gender equality requires, among other things, creating equal employment opportunities for women. It is evident that in many women's teams, across all sports, men often occupy key positions in the staff – even the position of head coach. In contrast, the presence of women remains limited. What is observed is the absence of women from the teams' staff, and even more so, from head coach positions. This is an issue that needs to change. It is vital to give more opportunities to women so they can prove their abilities and take on leadership roles.

### **What do you think are the main points of women's empowerment in basketball?**

As key points of empowerment, I would definitely mention the resilience of women. By nature, we have greater mental and physical endurance, which makes us strong and capable of meeting the demands of professional sports. Another equally important factor is empathy, which plays a crucial role in sports. When managing people, the ability to understand their psychology, perceive their emotional state, and support them during difficult moments is extremely valuable. I believe women have this ability naturally and can use it in their workplaces, strengthening their teams and contributing to achieving their goals. Additionally, I would emphasize women's instinct, which can often help in addressing situations early and finding solutions. In many cases, men approach things in a more rational way, while women also rely on intuition, which can be especially useful in critical moments. In summary, resilience, empathy, and women's instinct are three key elements that strengthen the position of women in basketball. Their presence can make a difference and contribute significantly to a team's success.

### **What is an example of gender bias you have experienced in your coaching career?**

Personally, I haven't experienced anything like that, I don't have any such example to share with you. I was fortunate to work with a men's team in Marousi when they were in the Elite League, and not only did I not feel any such incidents, but I was treated with absolute respect and equality.

