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Interview for the SheCOACH project

The art of coaching: Greek coach George Dikaoulakos on overcoming bias and empowering women coaches

George Dikaoulakos



George Dikaoulakos is a highly accomplished Greek basketball coach with an extensive career in both men's and women's basketball. Holding a diploma in Physical Education from Prishtina-Yugoslavia and the School of Basketball Coaches in Novi Sad-Yugoslavia, he has worked with top clubs and national teams across Europe.

He has coached teams in Greece, Turkey, Russia, Poland, Romania, and Italy, achieving multiple championships, cup titles, and EuroLeague Final Four appearances. His most notable successes include winning the EuroCup (2010),

multiple national championships (Greece, Turkey, Italy), and coaching in the EuroLeague Final Four (2016, 2023).

Dikaoulakos has also led national teams, including Latvia, Greece, and Slovenia, guiding them in major European competitions. Recognized for his tactical expertise, he has been named Coach of the Year multiple times in Greece, Italy, and the EuroLeague. Fluent in Serbo-Croatian, English, and Spanish, he continues to be a leading figure in international basketball, inspiring future coaches through his lectures and scouting expertise.

In addition to his coaching career, Dikaoulakos is an author, having written "The Art of Scouting" (www.theartofscouting.com) a book aimed at basketball coaches to enhance their understanding of opponent analysis and team improvement. His dedication to basketball and significant contributions to women's basketball have made him a respected figure in the sport.



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Have you noticed any differences in how male and female coaches are perceived in the sport?

Personally, I believe that there is a social racism against women when it comes to sports - and of course not only there. Especially in areas that require strategic and leadership skills, in some societies women are perceived as lacking the necessary qualifications, even though this has never been proven.

However, my own opinion is of less importance. What really matters are the numbers and statistics, which show that even in women's leagues, male coaches outnumber women many times over. This imbalance discourages young women who want to become coaches, leading to a vicious cycle that perpetuates the problem.

Do you think female coaches receive the same opportunities as male coaches at all levels of basketball?

Absolutely not, and I am emphatic about that. It's unfair, and as a man and as a member of society, I feel ashamed that this is still happening. There have been many fights over the years, and some battles have been won, but discrimination still consciously exists. Personally, I believe that if it were not for legislation imposing a mandatory percentage of women in certain positions and boards, we might not see any or very few women. And that is exactly what is happening in basketball with women coaches.

Have you worked with female assistant coaches? If so, what was your experience like?

Yes, of course. I won't tell lies to make things sound better by stating that I had only the best or the worst impressions, because I have encountered both. Just as could happen (and has happened) with some male partners. So, there is no difference either for the positive or the negative, because when we talk about the character, strength, leadership, knowledge and other characteristics of a coach, what we should be evaluating is the person in question, not their gender.

Do you believe having more female coaches would positively impact the game? Why or why not?

Yes, I do believe that. Not only in sport, but also in the society we live in. The significant increase in mental coaches in professional women's sports is a clear sign of the gap between male coaches and female athletes. Unfortunately, some of us either don't try to fill this gap or find it extremely difficult.

A female coach certainly has a relative advantage in this regard (without being at a disadvantage if she finds herself on a men's team). As long as her knowledge and leadership skills are at a high level, not only the players - male or female - but the sport itself will benefit from her presence. Moreover, she will be a shining example to other sectors of our society.