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Interview for the SheCOACH project

“It should be about the right person for the right job”: Belgian coach Gaëlle Bouzin on coaching beyond gender

Gaëlle Bouzin

Gaëlle Bouzin is a highly accomplished basketball coach from Ostend, Belgium, with extensive experience in both national and international leagues.

She is currently the Head Coach of Landstede Hammers in the BNXT League and previously served as an Assistant Coach for Filou Oostende, contributing to both BNXT League and Basketball Champions League campaigns.

During her tenure, she led individual player development sessions, contributed to team practices, and played a pivotal role in video scouting and opponent analysis.

In 2023, she stepped up as Interim Head Coach for the Coretec Basketball Academy, leading the U21 team to a national championship. Gaëlle also brought her expertise to the international stage as an Assistant Coach for the Belgian Men's National Team, handling scouting and practice coordination.

Her coaching foundation was built over several years with Duva Oostende, where she supported both senior and U21 squads through video analysis and tactical preparation. Gaëlle combines hands-on court leadership with advanced technical skills in scouting and analytics.

She holds the prestigious FIBA Europe Coaching Certificate (FECC), finishing among the top four of the 2023 class, and is a graduate of the inaugural Euroleague Head Coaches Academy. Gaëlle also holds a Bachelor's degree in Education, with a focus on Math, Biology, and Computer Sciences.



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What challenges do women coaches face compared to their male counterparts?

The number of jobs in our profession is small, so it's hard to get a chance, whether you are a male or female coach. But as a female coach you need a brave club/GM to take a leap and to take a chance on you because it is still something we don't see a lot in Europe (especially on the men's side). And once you get that opportunity there will be outside noise and scrutiny. You can't let that get to you, just put your head down and get to work. Focusing on your team & the players and the job that needs to be done.

Have you ever faced discrimination or bias as a female coach? How did you handle it?

I'm fortunate enough to have worked with some very talented basketball players the last couple of years, both young kids and more experienced players and I can honestly say that I have never experienced any discrimination from them. The way I gain their trust is a little bit different than a male coach would do. A male coach can rely on his own playing achievements or on his physical dominance to command respect immediately. That doesn't work for me, but I did find that 100% of the players trust their (ass) coach, whether if it is a male or female when first of all you know what you are talking about, you need to have the knowledge. And secondly, when they feel that you want to help them and have their best interest at heart, that you are there to help them on their path.

What steps can be taken to encourage more women to pursue coaching careers?

The fact that we are seeing female coaches in the head coaching role helps a lot in my opinion. Coaches like Becky Hammon, Dawn Staley, Liz Mills, Anna Montanana, Lauriane Dolt are paving the way all over the world and setting an example for young women. Further I think every young coach needs support on different levels: an older coach who will mentor them, a peer who challenges them to do better and people who offer support. And of course, the leagues and basketball organizations can do their part to help encourage young women. The only thing I'm not a fan of is the quota (a certain percentage of the jobs must be for women), because it should be about the right person for the right job, not about quota or numbers. That should be the end goal: a coach, regardless of gender, skin color or his history, gets hired because the coach is the right person for the job, the best possible fit.

What inspired you to become a basketball coach, and did gender play a role in your journey?

I played basketball for 25 years and started coaching young kids at the age of 18. Somehow those youth teams were always boys' team. I found out that it really suits me. And then 7 years ago I got the opportunity to work in Ostend with the men's basketball academy. And it grew from there. I love helping players figuring something out and being able to execute it afterwards.



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