

# WOMEN IN COACHING SPOTLIGHT



## WOMEN IN COACHING INTERVIEW

**Name: Gillian McCaughtry**

**Club/Crew you are currently coaching:**

**Belfast Rowing Club, J18**



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With Gillian McCaughtry

*Gillian is a well-known coach on the banks of the River Lagan. Her journey to coaching is a familiar story for many female coaches who find their love for the sport again when their children start rowing. Gillian has now become a key contributor to the sport in Belfast, developing young athletes and encouraging new coaches to get involved.*

## How did you get involved in coaching?

I started rowing as a junior at Methody (A long time ago!!). After that, I rowed at QUBLBC and then BRC. I had a long break from rowing when I married a non-rower and had 3 children. My eldest decided to start rowing in 2012 and it was only at Castlewellan Regatta in 2013 that I realised that the coaches could maybe do with a bit of help. I offered to help out one Saturday morning – and that was me back into the rowing scene again. At that time, Stevie Smith and Dave Webb were coaching the junior squad and we had a very enjoyable few years with the squad. Since then there have been quite a few other coaches involved – including my son who has now moved on to the heady heights of coaching adult novices at BRC.



## Your coaching highlight:

I love race days! Even though I don't take part anymore, I just love all the buzz and excitement of the races, as well as meeting up with familiar faces. The weekend trips away to regattas / head races are also great fun – though as a club junior coach, there is also a fair amount of organising to do for any races. Through my involvement with Get Going Get Rowing, I was the Team Manager with the Northern Ireland contingent who took part in the School Games 2018 in Loughborough University. This was the first time indoor rowing was included in the games. It was an amazing experience!



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## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE POSITIVES FEMALES BRING TO COACHING?

I was very lucky that my first coach at Methody was a female – Linda Brown. So I wasn't aware of the lack of female coaches. Linda was a fantastic coach who got the best out of her squad. I'm not sure what female coaches can bring specifically or whether it's down to personality. I think having a team of diverse coaches is key.

Coaching juniors is different to coaching adults as you also have to be involved in the admin and organisation of the squad as well as communicate with parents. There are also the dynamics of the squad to consider and keeping an eye on how the different personalities are working together. I think women can be very good communicators and good listeners, two very important aspects for a coach.



## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A NEW COACH OR SOMEONE CONSIDERING GETTING INVOLVED?

Definitely get involved - don't worry if you don't feel 'good enough'.

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses so you may not be confident in one area, but you will bring other talents to the role.

Make sure you know what you are letting yourself into – coaching can take up a lot of your time so set your limits as to how much you want to be involved.

But for all the hours you put into coaching, there are fantastic rewards.



PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY:  
ROWING IRELAND, WOMEN IN SPORT

If you would like to highlight any of your female coaches as a role model for this interview series, contact Claire at [claire.lambe@rowingireland.ie](mailto:claire.lambe@rowingireland.ie)