

WOMEN IN COACHING SPOTLIGHT



#WomenInSportIRE



WOMEN IN UMPIRING INTERVIEW

Name: Lisa O'Callaghan

Club/Crew you are currently coaching:

Waterford BC, J16 & J18



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With Lisa O'Callaghan

Lisa's contribution to the sport of rowing has been immense over the last 20 years. Lisa is Ireland's first female FISA Umpire and has umpired at the Coupe de la Jeunesse; European Junior Championships and U23 European Championships. In addition, Lisa has been a regular contributor off the water. Lisa was appointed Team Manager for the Homes International team since 2004; Team Manager for the Coupe de la Jeunesse in 2019; a member of the Rowing Ireland Board; Munster Vice-President for over a decade; and Chair of the Organising Committee for the Coupe held in Ireland in 2008.

How did you get involved in umpiring?

When I finished rowing, I became involved in club administration and coaching and realised how difficult it was to actually run a regatta. When I was rowing, all the officials were already in place when I arrived for the start of my race at every event and I just took it for granted. It was a real eye-opener to realise you needed volunteers for each of these roles, so I decided to sit the Umpires exam to help out at events and give something back to the sport. I have held my Irish Umpires licence since 2000 which was the stepping stone to getting my FISA International Umpires licence in 2014.



Your umpiring highlight:

The sense of satisfaction after umpiring my first race at my first regatta is something I will always remember. However, I would have to say my umpiring highlights are obtaining my FISA International Umpiring licence in 2014 and subsequently being part of the Jury for the European Junior Championships in Essen, Germany in 2019. It was the first time that FISA had selected a mostly female jury for an International Event – 60% of the Jury were female. We had an absolutely fantastic time at the event and I have made some lifelong friends out of it.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE POSITIVES FEMALES BRING TO UMPIRING?

Being a good umpire is not gender specific. When I was rowing, umpires were predominantly male, so it is great to see more females on the water after becoming umpires.

I hope to inspire young girls to get more involved in umpiring and I would encourage everyone to get involved once their rowing career is over. Once you keep a calm approach, analyse any problems that may occur during a race and decide on the outcome based on fairness for every athlete, then you won't go too far wrong.

Umpires are there to help the athletes and ensure they have a safe and fair race. At the end of a race, when you see the elation or disappointment on the athletes faces then you know you have done your job well.



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

I would say just do it ! If you over analyse it, you might talk yourself out of doing your umpires exam. There are always other umpires that you can ask opinions of, if you are in doubt about any umpiring decision. While it can be a bit stressful at times, it is hugely rewarding to give something back to the sport and help the athletes enjoy their racing experience.

After all, it is the best seat in the house to get a birds eye view of any race !



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