

# WOMEN IN COACHING SPOTLIGHT



## WOMEN IN COACHING INTERVIEW

Name: Meghan Hunter

Club/Crew you are currently coaching:

Queen's University Belfast



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with Meghan Hunter

## Number of years coaching?

Too many! 'Officially' about 9, 'unofficially' 20+ - there are stories of me shouting technical points at crews from my dad's knee when I was about 4!

## How did you get involved in coaching?

Both my parents rowed and coached, and as a junior I always wanted to grow up to be a coach too (ideally after winning an Olympic gold...), but after getting injured in my early years at university my coaching career was dragged forward, and I've been working as a performance coach ever since!



## Your coaching highlight:

There are so many to choose from, but BUCS Regatta is always a memorable week. There's something about the relentlessness of it – the hours spent on logistics beforehand, the sheer number of crews racing, the 14 hour days getting battered by the elements and the rollercoaster of emotions you go through as the results come in – that makes it a truly unforgettable (and some say scarring!) weekend. I will never forget my first experience as a coach there – the squad I was coaching had faced a few hurdles along the way and grown very close over the year. So even though there wasn't a gold medal to take home, their performance to get 4th in the BM4+ and silver in the BM8+ was very special.



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

I think the style in how we coach can be quite different – without wanting to stereotype, my involvement with female coaches has generally shown a more empathetic experience – in how they relate to the athlete and how they coach the rowing stroke. I have also found women coaches to be with generally more patient, placing value in the time it takes to talk to and understand who they are working with. I don't believe that female coaches are in any way 'softer' on their athletes or 'easier to please' – in fact quite the opposite. I've seen female coaches bring out new depths in a rower simply by using their unique relationship with that athlete and their increased attention to detail. Of course that's not to say men don't or can't do the same – I just haven't seen it as commonly.



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

Get out there – the same way that an athlete needs to get miles in the bank, a coach needs to be stacking up the hours they spend around rowing (either watching crews, shadowing other coaches or even just being around the boat house and seeing what goes on behind the scenes). I used to get so exasperated that nobody seemed to be able to explain **why** they were a good coach, but the truth is there is no set 'way' to go about it. Even when working with some of the top coaches in the country and spending hours with them and their crew – its still almost impossible to pinpoint exactly WHY they are that good; no secret message they tell their crews, no secret lesson other coaches can learn in order to be like them, it just takes time and an openness to question, try and learn.



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)