

# Women in a Digitized Sports Culture: Women Coaches and Referees

The Nordic Research Network *Women in a Digitized Sports Culture* would like to invite you to a one-day seminar on women coaches and referees. The seminar includes presentations by internationally renowned experts on women coaches and referees and will provide an arena for engagement between scholars and sports practitioners on the topic of technology and gender equity in coaching and refereeing.

**DATE:** June 23, 2022.

**LOCATION:** Quality Hotel Ramsalt, Conference section (2nd floor), Bodø – Norway.

The seminar is publicly open to all and free to attend. However, places are limited and registration in advance is required. Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided for all attendees.

## PROGRAM:

- 09.00 – 09.30: Welcome and presentation of the network's research agenda by **Professor Kirsten Frandsen** (School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University, Denmark)
- 09.30 – 10.45: *Women in sports coaching: What's the problem?* by **Professor Leanne Norman** (Carnegie School of Sport, Leeds Beckett University, UK)
- 10.45 – 11.00: **Coffee break**
- 11.00 – 12.15: *Developments in officiating research: Impacts on technology, groups and gender* by **Dr. Tom Webb** (University of Portsmouth, UK)
- 12.15 - 13.15: **Lunch**
- 13.15 - 14.15: *Gender and refereeing: experiences of a female handball referee* by **Malene Rosvold** (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)
- 14.15 – 14.30: **Coffee break**
- 14.30 – 15.30: Group discussions on technology, digitalization and gender equity in sports coaching and refereeing.
- 15.30 – 15.45: Summary of the day and closing remarks.

To register for the seminar please e-mail **Research Assistant Stian Røsten** at [stian.rosten@nord.no](mailto:stian.rosten@nord.no) by June 18th.

It is also possible to sign up for a boat trip and dinner at Arnøya Brygge (from 17.00 to midnight) with the research network participants. However, the costs of this must be covered by the attendee. Ask Stian for more information.



# Women in Sports Coaching: What's the Problem?

**Professor Leanne Norman,**  
Carnegie School of Sport,  
Leeds Beckett University, UK

### PRESENTER BIO:

Professor Leanne Norman is Director of the Centre for Social Justice in Sport & Society within the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University in the UK. She is an internationally recognised researcher for her research and writing on gender equity and sports coaching, sports leadership, and organisations. Her work is driven towards improving the coaching and leadership pathways for diverse social groups, principally, different groups of women. Leanne has written for academic and practitioner textbooks, written educational resources for coaches, and has published widely in academic journals related to sport and social issues. She has led national and international research projects as well as acted as academic expert and consultant for research funded by sport councils, governing bodies, international organisations and sport federations, and charities.



### PRESENTATION SYNOPSIS:

The focus of this conference more broadly, is on women in a digitised sports culture, whether that is women as athletes, coaches, or as leaders, and how different forms of mediatisation and digitisation can sustain or disrupt historical gender inequality in sport. But what precisely do we mean by 'inequality': how does that manifest in sport, what enables patterns of inclusion or exclusion, and therefore, what exactly is the 'problem' when it comes to women in sport? The focus of this presentation is to set the scene for the context of the conference. Precisely, Leanne will discuss the broader landscape of women's representation and experiences as sport coaches, drawing on the internationally leading programme of research on gender equity in sport coaching at the Centre for Social Justice in Sport & Society at Leeds Beckett University, UK. She will reflect on current individual and organisational thinking towards issues of gender diversity and inclusion and explore a different approach to reframing the 'problem'. Norman will explore the idea of turning our attention away from 'fixing women' to 'fixing systems' to adopt a more holistic, longer lasting, and sustainable approach to tackling the age-old issue of gender inequality in sport coaching.



# Developments in Officiating Research: Impacts on Technology, Groups and Gender



**Dr. Tom Webb,**  
Coordinator of the Referee and Match Official  
Research Network,  
University of Portsmouth, UK.

### PRESENTER BIO:

Tom Webb is Senior Lecturer in Sport Management, Course Leader for the MSc Sport Management, Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and Coordinator of the Referee and Match Official Research Network at the University of Portsmouth, UK. His primary teaching areas focus on sport management and sport governance. His research focuses on sports officials from multi-disciplinary perspectives with academic colleagues, collaborators, and sports around the world, including UEFA, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish and English Football Associations, World Netball, Dutch Olympic Committee, European Hockey Federation, the LTA, the Premier League, the ECB, the RFU. He has published two books and over 50 articles and book chapters on officiating. Most recently Tom's research has focused on the abuse towards sports officials, mental health and wellbeing, recruitment and retention of sports officials around the world and the barriers that female sports officials can face.

### PRESENTATION SYNOPSIS:

Research and understanding of sports officiating is constantly evolving. Over the past 20 years academic publications have increased and there has been a growing relationship between academics and industry professionals. However, despite these developments, women remain an under researched group within the officiating literature. In this presentation Dr Webb will give an introduction into officiating research and developments, the impact of technology on sports officials and the differences between the experiences of male and female officials. Some of the topics that will be introduced in this presentation are:

- Analysis of research and developments in female officiating
- Female officiating in Europe
- The impact of technological innovations on officiating
- Changes in officiating – the impact of commercialisation and professionalisation

The session will end with conversations about the impact of commercialisation and professionalisation on female officials and the potential developments in female officiating in the next few years.

### SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL:

**Benítez, A. J., Stepanian, E. & López, A. M. (2019).** *Video technology for refereeing in other sports: Tennis and rugby.* In **M. Armenteros, A. J. Benitez, & M. Á. Betancor (Eds.),** *The Use of Video Technologies in Refereeing Football and Other Sports* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429455551>

**Webb, T. (2019).** *Goal! Or is it? How technology – and not just VAR – is changing sport.* *The Conversation.* <https://theconversation.com/goal-or-is-it-how-technology-and-not-just-var-is-changing-sport-121838>

**Webb, T., Gorczyński, P., Oftadeh Moghadam, S., & Grubb, L. (2021).** *Experience and construction of mental health among English female football match officials.* *The Sport Psychologist*, 35(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.2020-0086>

# Gender and refereeing: Experiences of a Female Handball Referee

**Malene Rosvold,**  
Norwegian University of Science  
and Technology (NTNU)



### PRESENTER BIO:

Malene Rosvold is a research assistant in sports at the Department of Sociology and Political Science (ISS) at NTNU. In her research she predominantly focuses on gender and sports, referees, and leadership within the Norwegian sports organization. Rosvold is a handball referee, which has influenced her research interest. At both bachelor's and master's level, Rosvold investigated how the body and female gender effect female handball referees' conditions in the role and in the sport organization.

### PRESENTATION SYNOPSIS:

The handball sport in Norway is considered a female sport, and female players make up 2/3 of the federation's members. This is not reflected in the numbers of female referees at top level; this role is dominated by men. The international research on the field shows that the role is associated with the male gender and masculinity. In this session Rosvold will share some of her stories and experiences from the role and talk about how her gender has had a significant effect on how she has handled the role. Some of the topics that will be introduced in this presentation are:

- Experiences of the female body in sports refereeing
- Opposition to being called a female referee
- Male stakeholders and decisionmakers' impact on gender equity in refereeing
- Technological aspects of the refereeing role

### SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL:

Reid, K., & Dallaire, C. (2020). 'I'd like to think I'm a good referee': discourses of ability and the subjectivity of the female soccer referee in Ontario (Canada). *Soccer & Society*, 21(7), 762-777.

