
Triathlon Ireland
SHE SPARKS
IGNITING THE FUTURE OF WOMEN IN TRIATHLON
PARTICIPATION PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce Triathlon Ireland's Women in Sport Strategy 2026–2028, She Sparks.

As the first female President of Triathlon Ireland, it is a privilege to support a strategy that reflects both how far we have come and our ambition for the future. My own journey through triathlon has been shaped by the opportunities our sport can provide. From athlete to coach, technical official, club chair and now President, I have experienced first-hand the value of clear pathways, supportive mentors and a community that encourages women to participate, progress and lead.

Over recent years, the impact of our Women in Sport initiatives has been significant. Through programmes delivered under previous strategies, women have been supported to become athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and leaders. I have personally benefited from leadership and mentoring programmes supported by Triathlon Ireland and Sport Ireland, which helped me develop the confidence, skills and networks to take on new challenges and leadership roles. These experiences demonstrate the importance of investing in women and creating opportunities that allow them to realise their potential.

She Sparks builds on these strong foundations. It recognises that while we have made considerable progress, there is still work to do to ensure women and girls are represented at every level of our sport. Through a focus on leadership and governance, active participation, visibility, coaching and officiating, this strategy seeks to create meaningful and sustainable opportunities for women and girls to participate, perform, lead and belong.

What excites me most about this strategy is its commitment to inclusion and equity of opportunity. We recognise that not every woman or girl experiences sport in the same way. By actively engaging with under-served and marginalised communities, listening to lived experiences and addressing barriers to participation, we can create a sport that is welcoming, accessible and safe for all.

Whether someone is taking their first steps into triathlon, returning to sport, pursuing coaching or officiating qualifications, or aspiring to leadership positions, there should be a pathway that supports their ambitions. Our Women in Sport Advocates, clubs, volunteers, coaches, officials and partners will play a vital role in bringing this strategy to life. Together, we can build a stronger and more inclusive triathlon community where women and girls feel valued, supported and empowered to achieve their goals.

I look forward to working with our members and stakeholders over the coming years as we ignite the next phase of growth for women and girls in triathlon and ensure that our sport remains a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

I am proud to be the first female President of Triathlon Ireland, but I am even more proud that this strategy seeks to ensure I will not be the last.

Karen Lewis
President
Triathlon Ireland



Our Vision

Building on a strong foundation to ignite the next phase of growth, sparking opportunities for every woman and girl to participate, perform, lead and belong.



Our Mission

Energise our sport making it fun, vibrant, and inspiring for women and girls with accessible, adaptable pathways that provide opportunities for participation, coaching, officiating, and leadership with connection and belonging at its core.



Key Pillars



LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Achieve gender parity in leadership positions, boosting the voltage of female representation in leadership roles across Triathlon Ireland and its affiliated clubs.



ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Ignite a powerful spark to drive a surge in the participation rate of women and girls, electrifying growth across the organisation.



VISIBILITY

Illuminate women's achievements and experiences with consistent visibility across all media channels, events, and promotional campaigns, ensuring that their stories are a powerful current.



COACHING & OFFICIATING

Boost the representation of women in coaching and technical official roles.

Our Women in Sport Values

EVOLVE

Adapt with the changing landscape of our sport and participants. Engage with women and girls to understand their experience and ensure triathlon is a sport women want to belong to.

EMPOWER

Remove barriers, unlock potential, and create exciting opportunities for women to thrive and lead in all areas of our sport. Support women and girls with building the skills, confidence, and resources they need to excel as athletes, leaders, and role models.

EXCEL

Ensure that women are not only participants but key drivers in shaping the future of triathlon.

EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Fair access, meaningful support, and opportunities to succeed at all levels of the sport for all women and girls. Actively engage with women and girls from under-served and marginalised groups, to listen, understand and address their unique needs, and work to create an environment where everyone feels they belong.

EMBED

Create programmes and opportunities that are sustainable and affect long-term positive change for women and girls.

Building on Strong Foundations

The positive impact of previous Women in Sport strategies which rolled out the delivery of targeted and innovative ‘New to Tri’ programmes, wellness, coaching and leadership programmes for women and girls, has contributed to female participation and improved gender balance across the membership base.

Throughout the cycle of the ‘Beyond the Finish Line’ strategy, gender balance at Triathlon Ireland Board had not only been achieved but exceeded Sport Ireland quotas and female chair club positions have increased by 11% to 30% supported by WIS programmes including “Making Waves”, and “Women in Sport Leadership Programme”.

Wellness programmes and coach education and development support pathways have resulted in increased participation, more women coaching and awareness about issues specific to women in sport.



Setting the Scene

Following the successful delivery of the Triathlon Ireland 2021-2024 ‘Beyond the Finish Line’ Women in Sport strategy which saw significant and impactful outcomes, our 2026-2028 strategy will be equally ambitious. ‘She Sparks’ demonstrates a relentless commitment to fostering gender equity and creating meaningful opportunities for women and girls in triathlon within the overarching context of Sport Ireland’s Women in Sport Strategy. This commitment has already contributed to positive progress in participation, with women now making up almost 40% of Triathlon Ireland’s membership, increasing from 37.9% in 2023 to 39.7% in 2026. While this reflects a steadily more balanced membership, it also highlights the significant opportunity to build on this momentum and further increase female participation throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

This strategy will have a strong focus on equity in areas of disparity. Key areas of focus will include coaching and officiating, where there is a lack of progression particularly at higher levels. Coaching data demonstrates a clear gender progression gap as while women make up 46% of Tri Leaders, representation decreases to 38% and 29% at Level 1 and Level 2 respectively. Similar trends are seen in the officiating pathway. Between 2021 and 2024, women accounted for 37% of new officiating entrants overall, with representation declining from 50% in 2021 to 31% in 2024. The gender gap is most evident at Technical Official level, where women represented just 14% of new entrants in 2023 and no female entrants in 2024, highlighting the need for targeted recruitment and progression initiatives to support more women in officiating. This indicates that although women are engaging with coaching and officiating programmes at entry level, barriers to progression remain which must be addressed.

Recognising these gaps, this Women in Sport Strategy was developed to identify and dismantle barriers that limit women’s engagement, while building pathways for engagement, growth, success, and creating a place where women and girls feel they belong in our sport.



Implementation Framework

Implementation Framework: Through the tactics outlined in ‘She Sparks’, Triathlon Ireland will continue to lead the way in evolving and embedding women’s programmes in partnership with the women in our community. We will do this through an implementation framework led by the Triathlon Ireland Women in Sport Lead, which includes developing an action plan under each Strategic Pillar with clear deliverables, timelines and responsibilities for our executive team and board members. We will allocate appropriate resources by identifying financial, technological and staff resources required and leverage funding opportunities which align with our plan.



Partnerships

To make this strategy a success we will need the support of our partners and clubs. Clubs will play a pivotal role in supporting programmes and retention of women in triathlon. We will look to engage our stakeholders in consultation and collaboration, building on key partnerships with other Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships and Local Councils, sponsors, Triathlon clubs and advocates.

Communication and promotion will be key to the visibility of our programmes allowing women and girls to see what is available and possible for them.



Measuring Success

Monitoring and evaluation tools will allow the tracking and review of quantitative and qualitative data guiding any changes, development and improvements. Using this information we will be able to adapt to the evolving needs of the women and girls in our sport.

Triathlon Ireland aspires to bring ‘She Sparks’ to life with a bolt of electricity charging an inclusive environment where women and girls feel supported, celebrated, empowered and belonging.

High-Level Targets

- Maintain 40% female representation on Triathlon Ireland Board
- 40% female chairs in Triathlon Ireland affiliated clubs
- 4% increase in membership
- 10% increase in women completing Level 2 coaching
- 10% increase in women completing the Technical official programme
- 20% increase in WIS Triathlon growth and retention programmes



KEY PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN:

01 Leadership & Governance



OBJECTIVES	TACTICS	TARGETS
Achieve gender parity in leadership positions, boosting the voltage of female representation in leadership roles across Triathlon Ireland and its affiliated clubs.	Pathway: Provide leadership pathway training for women and girls in partnership with other NGBs offering alternative pathways to remain in sport and support and mentor other women and girls.	Deliver one annual women and girls focused leadership development programme.
		Ensure female representation on Triathlon Ireland Board is at a minimum of 40%.
	Visibility: Develop a social media campaign to highlight the pathway.	Increase the number of female chairs within Triathlon Ireland affiliated clubs by 10% from 30% to 40%.
	Support: Guidance and toolkits for clubs to foster gender-inclusive governance structures.	Establish a Women in Triathlon Leadership Group to share success stories, develop initiatives, and discuss challenges. From previous Women in Leadership cohorts, appoint 20 women as part of a Women in Triathlon Leadership Group.
		Recognise and celebrate women leaders through social campaigns.
		Establish an annual recognition programme highlighting 6 women leaders each year.
		Develop and distribute gender-inclusive governance toolkits to all affiliated clubs and support at least 30% of clubs to implement inclusive governance practices within 3 years.

KEY PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN:

02 Active Participation



OBJECTIVES	TACTICS	TARGETS
Ignite a powerful spark to drive a surge in the participation rate of women and girls, electrifying growth across the organisation.	Belonging: Create key consultation opportunities with current and potential members and stakeholders.	Consult with groups within and outside of our community to establish what belonging means for them in our sport.
	Participation: Finish lines, not finish times: Social, accessible, sustainable training opportunities for all women and girls.	Establish ongoing inclusive social training opportunities through Social Hubs nationwide, increasing female participation in recreational triathlon programmes by 20% over 3 years.
	Partnerships: Work with key partners to deliver programmes. Provide financial opportunities for clubs to engage with their communities to deliver sustainable programmes.	Partner with clubs and schools to deliver programmes for teenage girls, including the HER TRIbe initiative, integrating swimming, cycling, and running into regular club or PE sessions. These programmes will aim to build skills, foster confidence, and promote lifelong participation in triathlon, while creating a supportive and inclusive environment for young women.
	Inclusion: Create programmes that make our sport accessible for all.	In collaboration with Local Sports Partnerships, local councils and local triathlon clubs deliver introductory programmes for women throughout the year, aimed at encouraging participation in triathlon and supporting their progression in the sport. Target and support women who may have specific barriers to entry including costs and child care.

KEY PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN:

02 Active Participation Continued

OBJECTIVES	TACTICS	TARGETS
Ignite a powerful spark to drive a surge in the participation rate of women and girls, electrifying growth across the organisation.		Deliver key education sessions for women and coaches to support participation covering female-specific topics including midlife training and coaching teenage girls.
		Engage with community groups, clubs, and partners annually to inform inclusive implementation and embed participant feedback into programme design and delivery.
		Work with community partners to create bespoke opportunities for marginalised groups, including LGBTI+ groups, people with a disability and ethnic minorities, in line with the Sport Ireland Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
		Support women-only waves at key events annually, creating safe and empowering participation opportunities across the triathlon calendar.

KEY PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN:

03 Visibility



OBJECTIVES	TACTICS	TARGETS
Illuminate women's achievements and experiences with consistent visibility across all media channels, events, and promotional campaigns, ensuring that their stories are a powerful current.	Partnerships: Collaborate with media outlets to ensure coverage of women triathletes and women-specific triathlon events to increase media visibility and engagement.	Work with national and local media to promote women-specific events and stories.
		Deliver annual partnership campaigns with sponsors.
		Deliver regular women-focused content across Triathlon Ireland social media channels and website, including athlete take-overs and achievement features.
	In partnership with Club and Community sponsors, amplify campaigns highlighting women in triathlon.	Develop and run at least 4 campaigns annually promoting women's participation, visibility, and engagement in triathlon.
		Use Sport Ireland's Women in Sport Week each year to celebrate women's achievements across all strategic pillars through targeted content and events.
	Visibility: Using Triathlon Ireland social media platforms and website to leverage women -ocused campaigns to promote programmes and stories.	Triathlon Ireland Women in Sport Advocates to contribute content including articles, videos, social media take-overs, and event participation annually.
		Share and promote stories of women in triathlon regularly, highlighting athlete journeys, achievements, leadership, and participation pathways.
		Continue to develop the Women in Sport Advocates programme. Create a pathway for new advocates to be supported and mentored by current and former advocates. Create development opportunities including mentor training for current advocates to contribute locally and nationally to the growth of our sport.

KEY PROGRAMME ACTION PLAN:

04 Coaching & Officiating

OBJECTIVES	TACTICS	TARGETS
Boost the representation of women in coaching and technical official roles.	Pathways: Develop a supported Women's Coaching and Officiating Pathway programme.	Increase female representation in coaching and technical official roles annually.
	Provide support & opportunities to women with aspirations to be in officiating with Europe and/or World Triathlon.	Monitor active coaching and officiating in clubs and at events.
	Further develop a mentorship programme pairing experienced coaches and officials with aspiring female leaders.	Develop and deliver a supported Women's Officiating Pathway Programme.
	Performance: Create a bespoke pathway for women aspiring to be High Performance coaches.	Actively recruit women for coach developer and tutor roles.
	Performance: Pathways to support current athletes and athletes transitioning out of sport.	Develop and deliver a supported Women's Coaching Pathway Programme.
		Deliver women-only coaching and officiating courses with hybrid learning, mentoring, and shadowing opportunities.
		Establish "Women in Triathlon Coaching" and "Women in Triathlon Officiating" networks led by the advocates for support and knowledge sharing including workshops and mentoring.
		Collaborate with Europe Triathlon and World Triathlon to create development opportunities for female officials and coach developers.
		Expand mentoring opportunities for aspiring female coaches and officials.
		Increase female representation in European and international officiating pathways.
		Create an online platform for communication, networking, and resource sharing.
		In collaboration with the High Performance unit, provide immersive opportunities for female coaches to shadow and engage with the High Performance team.
		In collaboration with the High Performance unit, provide coaching scholarships for female athletes from the High Performance Unit.



The Numbers

Women Board Members as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number	3/6 (50%)	3/6 (50%)	4/9 (44%)	5/9 (56%)	5/9 (56%)

Women Club Chairs as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number	19/98 (19%)	16/101 (16%)	20/101 (20%)	29/98 (30%)	31/91 (34%)

Women Members as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Members	3416	3932	3992	4135	3999
One Day Membership	-	-	-	2186	1942

The Numbers

Tri Heroes Schools Programmes - Girls:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number	79	840	1234	1438	1538

Women Technical Officials as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Shadows	0	0	2	2	9
LTO	11	12	17	17	18
Level 1	3	2	2	3	3
Level 2	0	1	1	1	1

The Numbers

Women Coaches as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Trileader	46	64	144	188	213
Level 1	8	18	43	62	69
Level 2	0	7	11	13	13

Girls Youth Triathlon Commission as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number	N/A	6/12 (50%)	6/12 (50%)	4/10 (40%)	8/13 (62%)

Women Mentors as of 31st December of each year:

YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number	N/A	N/A	9/24 (38%)	9/24 (38%)	9/24 (38%)

Triathlon Ireland's Women in Sport Strategy 2026-2028

triathlonireland.com



For more information on our Women in Sport Programme, please contact:

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Triathlon Ireland