



WOMEN ATHLETES IN SPORTS MEDIA



Deliverable D4.1 – Output 1

Training Programme on the Fair Portrayal of Women Athletes in Sports Media

June 2026

ERASMUS-SPORT-2023-SCP
Grant Agreement No: 101185115



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TRAINING PROGRAMME ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES IN SPORTS MEDIA

“POWER – The portrayal of women athletes in sports media”

ERASMUS-SPORT-2023-SCP

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INTRODUCTION

The Training Programme on Fair Portrayal of Women Athletes in Sports Media was developed within the framework of the Project "POWER - The portrayal of women athletes in sports media (Erasmus Sport 2024, 101185115) to support more inclusive, balanced, and gender-sensitive practices in sports communication and journalism. The programme responds to persistent inequalities in the representation of women in sports media and aims to strengthen the capacities of media professionals, journalists, content creators, communication staff of sports organisations, and journalism students to critically assess and improve media content and communication practices.

Despite the growing visibility of women's sport in recent years, significant gender gaps continue to exist across sports media ecosystems. Women athletes remain underrepresented in media coverage, while existing representation is often shaped by stereotypes, biased narratives, unequal visibility, and disproportionate focus on appearance, personal life, or emotional framing rather than athletic performance and professional achievements. In many cases, editorial priorities, commercial pressures, and institutional practices further reinforce structural inequalities and limit diverse and fair representation.

The POWER project identified these challenges through extensive research and stakeholder engagement carried out in the previous project phases. The findings highlighted several key areas requiring intervention, including visibility and consistency of coverage, narrative diversity, structural balance within media systems, visual representation practices, and governance and accountability mechanisms within media organisations. These findings formed the basis for the development of the **POWER Strategy and Guidelines**, which provide practical recommendations for promoting gender equality in sports media.

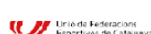
Building directly on these results, the present Training Programme translates the project's research findings and strategic recommendations into a practical and competence-oriented learning format. The programme combines theoretical knowledge with experiential and non-formal education methodologies, encouraging participants not only to reflect critically on existing media practices but also to develop concrete professional skills applicable in their daily work.

The training format is structured as a modular course consisting of five thematic modules:

1. **Visibility and Consistency**
2. **Narrative Diversity**
3. **Structural Balance**
4. **Visual Representation**



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5. Governance and Accountability

Each module addresses a specific dimension of gender representation in sports media and combines theoretical input with interactive learning activities, practical exercises, case studies, reflection tasks, and non-formal education approaches. The programme follows a learner-centred methodology that promotes active participation, peer learning, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving.

The overall objective of the training programme is to equip participants with the knowledge, practical tools, and critical awareness necessary to contribute to more ethical, inclusive, and balanced sports media environments. More specifically, the programme aims to:

- strengthen understanding of structural gender bias in sports media;
- improve participants' ability to critically analyse media content from a gender perspective;
- support the development of inclusive communication, reporting, and storytelling practices;
- encourage the use of gender-sensitive and evidence-based approaches in sports journalism and communication;
- promote institutional responsibility and accountability in advancing gender equality within media organisations.

The programme is designed as a flexible 15–20-hour blended learning course, combining in-person and online learning elements. It is intentionally practice-oriented and adaptable to different national contexts and professional backgrounds. Particular emphasis is placed on participant engagement through workshops, simulations, discussions, and case-study-based learning, ensuring that participants can directly apply the acquired competences in real professional environments.

In addition to supporting individual capacity-building, the training programme aims to contribute to broader systemic change by encouraging media professionals and organisations to adopt more responsible, diverse, and gender-equal communication practices in sports media.



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GUIDELINES FOR TRAINERS

These guidelines were developed to support trainers delivering the POWER Training Programme on Fair Portrayal of Women Athletes in Sports Media. Their purpose is to ensure a coherent, inclusive, participatory, and high-quality implementation of the training across different countries and learning environments.

The training programme addresses topics that are closely connected to personal beliefs, professional practices, institutional cultures, and social norms. For this reason, trainers play a central role not only in transferring knowledge, but also in facilitating critical reflection, dialogue, and safe interaction among participants. Trainers are encouraged to approach the sessions as facilitators of learning rather than traditional lecturers.

The guidelines below aim to help trainers create an engaging learning environment that supports participation, openness, mutual respect, and practical application of knowledge.

I. Core Principles for Training Delivery

1. Ensure a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Gender representation and discrimination can be sensitive and sometimes polarising topics. Participants may come from different professional, cultural, or personal backgrounds and may have varying levels of awareness regarding gender equality issues.

At the beginning of the training, trainers should establish clear group agreements regarding respectful communication, active listening, confidentiality, and constructive participation. Participants should feel comfortable expressing opinions, asking questions, and reflecting critically without fear of judgement or ridicule.

Trainers should:

- encourage respectful disagreement and discussion;
- avoid confrontational or accusatory approaches;
- address discriminatory or inappropriate comments calmly and constructively;
- ensure equal speaking opportunities within the group;
- remain neutral and facilitative during debates.



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The objective is not to shame participants for existing practices or opinions, but to support reflection, awareness, and professional growth.

2. Apply a Participatory and Learner-Centred Approach

The training programme is designed around active participation and experiential learning. Trainers should minimise long lecture-style delivery and instead prioritise interaction, discussion, collaborative learning, and practical application.

Participants should be treated as professionals who already possess valuable experience and knowledge. Training activities should create opportunities for participants to connect project concepts with their own professional realities and challenges.

Whenever possible, trainers should:

- encourage participants to share examples from their own media or communication contexts;
- use reflection questions and guided discussions;
- facilitate peer-to-peer learning;
- integrate practical exercises and real-life case analysis;
- adapt facilitation methods according to participants' backgrounds and engagement levels.

The recommended balance is approximately:

- 30–40% theoretical input;
- 60–70% interactive and practical learning activities.

3. Promote Inclusion and Accessibility

Trainers should ensure that the training environment and communication style are inclusive and accessible to all participants.

This includes:

- using gender-inclusive and non-discriminatory language;
- avoiding assumptions based on gender, nationality, profession, age, or background;
- ensuring that examples and case studies reflect diversity;
- adapting communication styles when working with participants with different levels of expertise or language proficiency;
- encouraging participation from quieter or less confident participants.



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If online or blended learning formats are used, trainers should also ensure digital accessibility and provide clear instructions for participation.

II. Practical Facilitation Guidelines

1. Start Each Module with Context and Relevance

At the beginning of each module, trainers should clearly explain:

- the objectives of the session;
- the expected learning outcomes;
- the relevance of the topic for professional practice;
- how the module connects to the broader POWER project findings and Strategy & Guidelines.

Participants engage more actively when they understand the practical relevance of the topic to their daily work.

2. Use Real and Relevant Examples

The training should remain strongly connected to real media practices and contemporary sports communication environments.

Whenever possible, trainers should use:

- real media headlines;
- sports articles;
- social media posts;
- interviews;
- photographs and visual campaigns;
- video clips;
- examples from national media contexts.

Using authentic examples helps participants better recognise patterns of bias, stereotyping, and unequal representation.

At the same time, trainers should avoid relying only on extreme or obviously problematic examples. Subtle and mainstream examples are often more useful for critical analysis because they reflect everyday media practices.



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3. Facilitate Reflection Rather than Giving “Correct Answers”

Many participants may expect direct recommendations or “right/wrong” answers. However, the objective of the training is to strengthen critical thinking and professional awareness.

Trainers should therefore:

- ask open-ended questions;
- encourage participants to analyse why certain portrayals exist;
- explore structural and institutional factors influencing media practices;
- support participants in identifying practical alternatives and improvements.

Reflection is often more valuable than simple theoretical explanation.

Examples of useful facilitation questions include:

- “What message does this image/article communicate?”
- “Whose perspective is missing here?”
- “Would this portrayal be different if the athlete were male?”
- “What editorial choices may have influenced this outcome?”
- “How could this content be reframed more inclusively?”

4. Encourage Balanced Participation

In mixed groups, some participants may dominate discussions while others remain passive. Trainers should actively manage participation dynamics.

Useful strategies include:

- working in smaller groups;
- rotating spokespersons;
- using written reflection before open discussion;
- directly inviting quieter participants to contribute;
- setting time limits during discussions.

Special attention should be paid to avoiding situations where certain participants become positioned as “representatives” of a specific gender or group.



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III. Guidelines for Managing Sensitive Situations

1. Respond Constructively to Resistance or Defensive Reactions

Some participants may initially question the relevance of gender equality in sports media or perceive the topic as ideological or exaggerated. Trainers should avoid entering confrontational debates.

Instead, trainers should:

- acknowledge differing perspectives respectfully;
- redirect discussions toward evidence and professional standards;
- use research findings and concrete examples;
- encourage analytical rather than emotional discussion;
- focus on media quality, ethics, fairness, and professional responsibility.

The goal is to maintain constructive engagement rather than “win” arguments.

2. Address Stereotypes Carefully and Critically

Discussions around stereotypes can unintentionally reinforce harmful narratives if not facilitated carefully.

When analysing problematic examples, trainers should:

- clearly contextualise why certain portrayals are problematic;
- avoid reproducing discriminatory language unnecessarily;
- encourage participants to critically unpack stereotypes rather than simply identify them;
- connect stereotypes to broader structural patterns in sports media.

3. Be Prepared for Emotional Reactions

Certain topics or examples may trigger frustration, discomfort, or personal experiences among participants. Trainers should remain attentive to group dynamics and emotional responses.

If tensions arise:

- acknowledge the discussion respectfully;



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- allow space for reflection;
- redirect the conversation toward constructive analysis;
- avoid escalating conflict or singling out participants.

Maintaining psychological safety is essential for productive learning.

IV. Methodological Recommendations

1. Combine Different Learning Methods

To maintain engagement and accommodate different learning styles, trainers should combine:

- short presentations;
- facilitated discussions;
- group work;
- case-study analysis;
- role play and simulations;
- reflection exercises;
- practical media analysis tasks;
- peer feedback activities.

Long theoretical explanations without interaction should be avoided whenever possible.

2. Prioritise Practical Application

The programme is intended to support professional practice. Trainers should therefore consistently connect concepts to real working situations and encourage participants to identify concrete ways of applying the learning outcomes in their own contexts.

Whenever possible, participants should leave the training with:

- practical tools;
- actionable ideas;
- reflection points for their organisations;
- concrete improvements they can apply in their media or communication work.



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3. Adapt the Training to the Group Context

The training format should remain flexible. Trainers are encouraged to adapt activities, examples, and discussion depth according to:

- participants' professional profiles;
- previous knowledge;
- national media realities;
- time availability;
- group size and dynamics.

However, the core learning objectives and principles of the POWER project should remain consistent across all training implementations.

V. Recommendations for Online and Blended Learning

When implementing online or blended learning activities, trainers should:

- provide clear technical instructions in advance;
- use interactive digital tools where appropriate;
- maintain shorter and more dynamic sessions;
- include regular interaction and discussion moments;
- ensure participants remain actively involved throughout the session.

Online sessions should avoid excessive passive listening, as participant engagement decreases significantly in fully lecture-based digital formats.

VI. Ethical and Professional Considerations

Trainers are expected to:

- use reliable and evidence-based information;
- respect copyright and source attribution when using media materials;
- avoid partisan political framing;
- maintain professional neutrality during discussions;
- model inclusive communication practices throughout the training.

Trainers should also remain aware that they themselves may carry unconscious biases. Continuous self-reflection and openness to feedback are therefore important parts of the facilitation process.



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Final Note for Trainers

The POWER Training Programme is not intended simply to provide information about gender equality in sports media. Its broader aim is to encourage critical awareness, professional responsibility, and long-term behavioural change within media and sports communication environments.

For this reason, the quality of facilitation, participation, and reflection is just as important as the training content itself. Trainers are encouraged to approach the process with flexibility, empathy, openness, and a strong focus on practical relevance and collaborative learning.

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MODULE 1: Visibility and Consistency

Introduction

The Visibility and Consistency Module, addresses one of the most critical gaps identified in current sport media. Research shows that media coverage is often irregular and event-driven, peaking during major tournaments like the Olympic games, before disappearing for long periods of time. This sporadic coverage of female athletes prevents audiences from developing familiarity with athletes and teams, and it reduces visibility and potential sponsorship opportunities. Promoting fair representation through consistent visibility is essential because it challenges stereotypes, it provides role models for young girls and women and it creates economic opportunities for female athletes and sports organizations.

Learning Objectives

1. **Understand Structural Bias:** Comprehend the structural nature of gender bias in sports media and its direct impact on visibility, narratives, and overall representation.
2. **Identify Media Patterns:** Recognize and analyze patterns of visibility and underrepresentation of women in sports media, focusing specifically on the frequency, framing, and context of media coverage.
3. **Recognize Representation Gaps:** Identify the key data gaps highlighted by the POWER project, including the lack of coverage for less publicized sports, and understand their broader implications for daily media practice.
4. **Critically Evaluate Editorial Choices:** Critically assess editorial decision-making processes to identify implicit biases and actively recognize where representation is lacking.
5. **Apply Best Practices:** Translate these insights into actionable strategies to promote more inclusive, balanced, and diverse sports journalism.

Exercise/Training Method



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Summer (In)visibility	
Learning Outcomes	- Understanding of implications for media practice - Awareness of its impact on visibility, narratives, and representation - Critical awareness of systemic patterns shaping media portrayal of female athletes - Ability to construct media workflows that balance coverage between men's pre-season friendly matches and women's official tier-2/3 European competitions. - Trainees will gain strategic awareness of how consistent calendar placement during the "dead" summer months directly impacts long-term corporate sponsorship. - Understanding how to transition a temporary "hype peak" (e.g., an Olympic or European medal) into a sustainable, multi-month narrative.
Timeframe	The timeframe should be 60 minutes in total. The analysis can be 15', the interactive activity 30', and the final team reflection 15' minutes.
Materials	The 2026 Summer Editorial Dashboard: A visual calendar mapping out July, August, and September 2026, showing overlapping men's and women's events (optional). Worksheets & Markers: Large flipchart paper (or A3 sheets) and markers for each team to write down and visually display their 3-month content calendar and match-day workflow. Flipchart Paper & Markers (One set per team): Large blank sheets of paper and colored markers. The teams can use these to physically draw or write out their solutions (i.e., drawing a timeline for the 3-month track calendar, or sketching how they will divide their website homepage for the football match).



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Step-by-step description

The trainer highlights “The Summer Media Paradox”. Between July and September, mainstream sports media suffers from a “dead zone” where they endlessly loop unverified transfer rumors for men’s football. Concurrently, elite female athletes are competing in official European and World qualifiers (e.g., UEFA Women’s Champions League, Diamond League) with close to zero visibility. The trainer introduces the professional cost: this structural inconsistency breaks the commercial pipeline for women’s sports right before the winter season begins.

Split the participants into small teams. Present the two scenarios below. For each scenario, teams have 10 minutes to brainstorm and 5 minutes to pitch their solution to the room.

Scenario 1: The August Track

(Scenario’s Focus: Keeping an athlete visible after a big win)

The Situation: It is late August 2026. A female track athlete wins a gold medal at the European Athletics Championships in Birmingham. Your sports website traffic explodes, everyone is clicking on her story.

The Problem: The Championships end, and September begins. The athlete is still competing in the elite Diamond League circuits, but your newsroom typically stops covering track and field once the major medal ceremony is over. Her visibility drops to zero.

The Team Challenge (15 Minutes):

You have a viral audience right now. Write down a **3-month editorial plan** (September to November) to keep this athlete **visible** on your platform. What weekly content, video formats, or social media series will you create so that her audience, and her sponsors, don’t disappear the moment the championship ends?

Scenario 2: The July-August Football Paradox

(Scenario’s Focus: Balancing resources between men’s friendlies and women’s official games)



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	The Situation: It is a Tuesday evening in August 2026. The men's football team of a major club is playing a friendly pre-season match. At the exact same time, the women's football team of the same club is playing a high-stakes, official UEFA Women's Champions League qualifying match. The Problem: Your newsroom has limited staff on the summer shift. Legacy habits mean your editors want to send all available reporters to cover the men's friendly match because "men's football gets more clicks." The Team Challenge (15 Minutes): Your newsroom cannot hire new staff. How do you re-organize your digital tools and current team so that the women's official European match gets equal visibility on your homepage and social media? (Suggestions: using automated live-score feeds for the men's friendly, split-screen social media updates, or alternating mobile push notifications).
Debriefing and evaluation	The trainer brings the room together to discuss: Why do we naturally spend high resources on low-stakes men's exhibition matches, but ignore official, high-stakes women's European matches? Is it actual fan demand, or just an old newsroom habit? If a major brand wants to sponsor a women's team year-round, how does our media "blackout" during the July-September months damage that sponsor's investment? Measurement of Success: Participants are successful if they provide concrete newsroom actions (i.e, "We will use automated data for the friendly and send our live reporter to the women's match") instead of just saying "we should cover both."

**Recommendations
(if any)**

Enforce the "Zero-Budget" Constraint

Media professionals might try to solve the problem by saying, "We would just hire a freelance reporter to cover the women's match." You must strictly forbid this. Force them to work with the exact staff they already have. The magic of this exercise happens when they are forced to automate a men's pre-season friendly using live data feeds so they can free up a real human reporter to cover the women's competitive match.

Focus heavily on the "Sponsorship Hook" during Debriefing

Remind the trainees that sports journalism is tied to sports business. If a media house stops covering an athlete for the three months of summer, they destroy that athlete's commercial value. A sponsor does not buy a 2-week Olympic peak; they buy a 365-day relationship with a fanbase. If the media platforms create a 3-month blackout, they are actively losing money for the sport and their own advertising space.

Localization for the 6 Countries

To make this training highly relevant in Greece, Spain, Bulgaria and all the other partner countries, tell the local trainers to use the names of **real local clubs** and **local female athletes** who will actually be competing in summer 2026. For example:

In Greece, use a prominent local club's women's football team and a real Greek track star (like Antigoni Ntrismpioti or Elina Tzengko).



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Women and sports coverage	
Learning Outcomes	- Design Inclusive Media Layouts: Create and implement structural frameworks for sports coverage, such as dedicated recurring women's sports slots, columns, or broadcast segments. - Apply Data-Driven Scheduling: Translate insights on structural gender bias into actionable workflows by setting and monitoring weekly visibility and content targets for women's sports. - Build Strategic Content Pipelines: Establish active partnerships with athletic federations and clubs to secure a consistent pipeline of diverse stories, focusing heavily on less-publicized sports. - Produce Multi-Platform Multimedia Content: Develop and deploy impactful visual assets and athlete-centered narratives tailored for print, digital, and social media platforms. - Audit Representation Practices: Critically evaluate current sports media outputs to identify the specific gaps and representation challenges highlighted by the POWER project.
Case Study Summary	Research within the POWER project has shown that there is a great "Visibility Gap" regarding representation and visibility of female athletes in newspapers and sports websites. According to data, only 2,7% of content themes focus on women's sports and athletes. This case study will showcase and challenge this, by requiring participants to audit actual local front pages up to one month prior and find women's sport stories that were ignored and buried in smaller columns.
Timeframe	The timeframe should be 60 minutes in total. The case study analysis can be 10', the hands-on editing 35', and the final team presentation 15' minutes.



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Materials	For a print-based session, the trainer will provide physical local sports newspapers published within the last month along with a set of red and green markers. Alternatively, for a digital session, participants will need laptops, tablets, or smartphones to audit the live online homepages of their country's top <i>three</i> national sports outlets, such as Gazzetta.gr in Greece or Marca.com in Spain. A paper-based Media Visibility Log , provided by the trainer, is required for teams to track the layouts and draft their new headlines.
Step-by-step description	Participants begin by working in small groups of three to four to analyse their designated media layout. When working with physical print, teams use red markers to circle any female athlete mentions, calculate the "White Space" of underrepresentation, and use green markers to identify and cross out low-value men's filler content like transfer rumors. For the live online case study, teams skip the colored markers entirely and instead use their paper-based Media Visibility Log to list the prominent men's rumors currently occupying prime digital real estate, before searching the internet in real-time to find three actual women's sports stories from that week as direct replacements. To conclude the exercise, all groups must "re-edit" their layout by drafting professional, performance-based headlines for their chosen women's stories, focusing strictly on athletic skills and tactics rather than personal lives or emotional reactions.
Guiding Questions	How many men's "non-news" stories (rumors, social media posts) took priority over actual women's competition results? If we only provide 2.7% coverage, how can we expect the public to learn the names of the National Women's Football Team players? Is the lack of coverage due to a "lack of achievement" or a structural editorial preference for male-dominated team sports?



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Debriefing and evaluation	The group will reflect on how it felt to "delete" a male-dominated story to make room for a woman's achievement. What technical issues did the team face, if any? Did they struggle to find the technical details of the women's matches? Regarding evaluation, the trainers can inquire whether the new headlines focus on skill and professionalism rather than personal lives. The learning outcome is achieved if participants recognize visibility as a strategic choice rather than a passive reflection of "what sells."
Recommendations (if any)	Emphasise that " Consistency equals equality ", moving a story to the front page is a strategic editorial choice.

Supporting Materials & Handouts

SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING MATERIAL (TRAINER TOOLKIT)

MODULE 1: Visibility and Consistency

This toolkit provides the missing standalone components required for the practical implementation of the training program. It serves as a direct, functional extension of the core file.

Summer (In)visibility (Example for Trainers)

Trainers must fill this out 10 minutes before the session so they don't have to scramble for examples on the fly. Provide them with this cheat sheet template:

Country	Scenario 1: Local Track Star & Sport	Scenario 2: Major Local Football Club	Real Women's Counterpart Competition
Greece	Antigoni Ntrismpioti (Race Walking) or Elina Tzengko (Javelin)	Panathinaikos, Olympiacos, or PAOK	UEFA Women's Champions League (UWCL) Qualifiers



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Country	Scenario 1: Local Track Star & Sport	Scenario 2: Major Local Football Club	Real Women's Counterpart Competition
Spain	Trainer to fill in (e.g., María Pérez)	Real Madrid or FC Barcelona	UWCL Qualifiers / Liga F Action
Bulgaria	Trainer to fill in (e.g., Plamena Mitkova)	Ludogorets or CSKA Sofia	UWCL Qualifiers / National League
Portugal	Auriol Dongmo (Shot Put) or Patrícia Mamona (Triple Jump)	SL Benfica or Sporting CP	UWCL Qualifiers / Campeonato Nacional Feminino
Hungary	Luca Kozák (100m Hurdles) or Petra Farkas (Long Jump)	Ferencváros (FTC) or MTK Budapest	UWCL Qualifiers / Női NB I
Italy	Antonella Palmisano (Race Walking) or Larissa Iapichino (Long Jump)	Juventus, AS Roma, or AC Milan	UWCL Qualifiers / Serie A Femminile

The "Zero-Budget" Tech Cheat Sheet

During the 30-minute interactive block, trainees might claim they "don't have the resources" to cover both football matches. Give your trainers this technical cheat sheet so they can push back and guide the teams toward modern media workflows.

Trainer Guidance: How to Counter Trainee Excuses

- If trainees say: "We can't cover the women's match because our only reporter has to be at the men's stadium."
- Trainer Counter-Push: "Leave the men's stadium empty. Use an automated widgets/live-data feed (like Opta or SofaScore) to push live updates of the men's friendly to your website. Send your human reporter to the women's high-stakes match to get original quotes, video clips, and emotional narratives."
- If trainees say: "Social media can only focus on one thing at a time."



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- Trainer Counter-Push: "Implement a Split-Screen Template Strategy. Create graphics that update both scores simultaneously on Instagram Stories, or use automated threads on X to alternate updates: Odd minutes = Women's Champions League; Even minutes = Men's Friendly."

The "Sponsorship Hook" Debrief Guide

To achieve the strategic learning outcomes regarding long-term corporate sponsorship, the trainers need a talking-points guide for the final 15-minute reflection.

The "Why Summer Matters" Talking Points for Trainers:

- The 365-Day Business Reality: Brands do not sponsor athletes for a two-week Olympic or European Championship high. They sponsor them to gain continuous brand alignment with a loyal fanbase.
- The Media Blackout Penalty: When a media outlet stops covering a gold medalist in September and October (the Diamond League circuits), they are actively shrinking that athlete's digital footprint.
- The Consequences: This drop in visibility makes it incredibly difficult for the athlete to prove value to their corporate sponsors, which dries up the financial pipeline for the entire sport right before winter. Media silence directly causes financial starvation for women's sports.

Media Visibility Log

Women and sports coverage

Team: _____ Outlet Audited: _____ Date of Publication: _____



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Slot	1. Layout Location (Where is it on the page?)	2. Displaced Men's Filler (What non-news are you deleting?)	3. Replacement Women's Sport (What actual event/match found?)	4. Re-Engineered Headline (Draft a performance/skill-focused headline)
01				
02				
03				
04				
05				
06				
07				
08				

2. Micro-Audit Cheat Sheet

- **Column 2 (Filler Check):** Is it a transfer rumor, off-season vacation update, social media drama, or unverified gossip? If it has no active match impact, delete it.
- **Column 4 (Headline Check):** Does it pass the **Performance Test**? Strip out emotional words (*heartbreak, stunning, miracle, beauty*) and replace them with technical actions (*tactical shift, defensive block, clinical finish, record split*). Completely avoid gender qualifiers like "women's team" unless structurally required.



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3. Presentation Pitch Metrics

Compile these numbers in the last 2 minutes of your editing block to use during your team presentation.

- **Total Men's "Non-News" Stories Removed:**

- **Total Women's Competitions Restored to the Page:**

- **New Disciplines Introduced:** (e.g., Tennis, Volleyball, Water Polo)

- **The Technical Challenge:** Did your team struggle to find statistics or match data for the women's stories online?

☐ Yes / ☐ No (Explain why during the debrief)



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Women's Sports Calendar 2026

JULY · AUGUST · SEPTEMBER — MAJOR
EUROPEAN & INTERNATIONAL EVENT

July

DATES	EVENT	SPORT	LOCATION
until 5 Jul	ICC Women's T20 World Cup	CRICKET	England & Wales
1-12 Jul	CEV U18 Women's Volleyball European Championship	VOLLEYBALL	Latvia & Lithuania
6-12 Jul	CEV U22 Women's Volleyball European Championship	VOLLEYBALL	Netherlands
until 12 Jul	Wimbledon Championships (Women's Singles)	TENNIS	London, England
22 Jul - 2 Sep	UEFA Women's Champions League 2026-27 Qualifying	FOOTBALL	Europe
24-26 Jul	Tour de Pologne Women (UCI ProSeries)	CYCLING	Poland
23 Jul - 2 Aug	Commonwealth Games (multiple women's sports)	MULTI-SPORT	Glasgow, Scotland
29 Jul - 9 Aug	IHF Women's U18 Handball World Championship	HANDBALL	Romania



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August

DATES	EVENT	SPORT	LOCATION
1-9 Aug	Tour de France Femmes avec Zwift	CYCLING	Switzerland → France
30 JuL - 2 Aug	AIG Women's Open (Major)	GOLF	Royal Lytham & St Annes, EngLand
3-9 Aug	Women's European U-20 Water Polo Championship	WATER POLO	Oeiras, PortugaL
10-16 Aug	European AthLetics Championships (incL. women)	ATHLETICS	Birmingham, EngLand
20 Aug	GP Lucien Van Impe (UCI Pro Series)	CYCLING	Belgium
21 Aug - 6 Sep	EuroVoLLey Women 2026	VOLLEYBALL	Azerbaijan, Czech Rep., Sweden, Turkey
31 Aug - 13 Sep	US Open (Women's SingLes)	TENNIS	New York, USA
24-30 Aug	World Rowing Championships (incL. women)	ROWING	Amsterdam, Netherlands



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September

DATES	EVENT	SPORT	LOCATION
5-27 Sep	FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup	FOOTBALL	Poland
4-13 Sep	FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup	BASKETBALL	Berlin, Germany
6 Sep	Pointe du Raz Ladies Classic (UCI Pro Series)	CYCLING	France
7-13 Sep	Solheim Cup (Europe vs USA)	GOLF	Cromvoirt, Netherlands
11-13 Sep	World Athletics Ultimate Championship (incl. women)	ATHLETICS	Budapest, Hungary
13 Sep	La Choralis Fourmies Féminine (UCI ProSeries)	CYCLING	France
13 Sep	Women's Cycling Grand Prix Stuttgart & Region (UCI Pro Series)	CYCLING	Stuttgart, Germany
w/c 21 Sep	Billie Jean King Cup Finals	TENNIS	Shenzhen, China

Football Tennis Cycling Basketball Athletics Volleyball
Handball Golf Aquatics Cricket Multi-sport
Rowing



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MODULE 2: Narrative Diversity

Introduction

This module focuses on narrative diversity and visibility in sports media, examining how gender stereotypes are constructed, reproduced, and challenged through journalistic narratives, editorial choices, and communication practices. Sports media do not simply report events; they actively shape public perceptions by determining which stories are told, whose voices are heard, and how athletes are represented.

Media representation is not neutral. Through language, framing, images, and storytelling techniques, media outlets contribute to the social construction of gender norms and expectations. Research in sports communication consistently highlights that female athletes are often portrayed through emotional, aesthetic, or personal narratives rather than performance-based discourse, while male athletes are predominantly represented through competence, strength, leadership, and achievement-oriented language. This imbalance contributes to the persistence of gender stereotypes, limits the visibility and legitimacy of women's sport, and influences audience perceptions, sponsorship opportunities, and media coverage patterns.

The module emphasises that fair representation is not only a matter of visibility, but also of how athletes are portrayed. Increasing the quantity of coverage devoted to women athletes is important, but it is equally necessary to ensure that media narratives are accurate, respectful, inclusive, and focused on sporting achievements rather than appearance, private life, or stereotypical assumptions. By critically examining common media practices, participants will be encouraged to reflect on the role that journalists, editors, communication professionals, bloggers, and content creators play in shaping more inclusive sports narratives.

The learning objective of this module is to strengthen participants' ability to recognise and challenge gender bias in sports media narratives. Participants will explore how language, framing, storytelling, and editorial choices influence public perceptions of athletes and will become familiar with practical tools for producing inclusive, accurate, and non-stereotypical sports content. The module also aims to encourage critical reflection on the ethical responsibilities of media professionals in promoting diversity, equality, and fair representation.

After completing the module, participants are expected to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support more inclusive communication practices in sports media. They will gain a deeper understanding of how gender stereotypes operate within sports journalism and communication, as well as awareness of the structural and cultural factors that contribute to unequal representation.



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Participants will strengthen their ability to identify biased narratives, apply gender-sensitive reporting techniques, and create content that prioritises athletic performance, expertise, and achievement. In addition, the module aims to foster attitudes of critical thinking, professional responsibility, respect for diversity, and commitment to promoting fair and balanced portrayals of women athletes across sports media environments.

Learning Objectives

1. Acquire practical tools for producing inclusive, accurate, and non- stereotypical sports content
2. Strengthen their ability to apply gender-sensitive reporting, storytelling, and visual communication techniques

Exercise/Training Method

Headline Rewrite Lab	
Learning Outcomes	1. Understanding of principles and standards for inclusive, accurate, and non-stereotypical sports content. 2. Ability to apply practical tools and techniques to produce inclusive and bias-free sports media content.
Timeframe	10 minutes – Introduction and explanation of activity 15 minutes – Group work (analysis & rewriting headlines) 20 minutes – Presentation of group outputs 15 minutes – Debriefing and evaluation



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Materials

The following Sports Titles, Comments or Descriptions in Print Format (10 examples):

1. ***"The Trio of Chubby Girls Nearly Achieves an Olympic Miracle"***

An unfortunate headline published by the newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino*.
<https://www.dongiorgio.it/09/08/2016/questi-idioti-insulsi-telecronisti-delle-olimpiadi/>

Consideration:

This headline reduces the athletes to their physical appearance rather than recognising their sporting achievements. The use of the term *"chubby girls"* reinforces body-related stereotypes and shifts attention away from athletic performance, contributing to the objectification and trivialisation of women athletes.

2. ***"Alessia Orro, the World Champion Setter with Juventus in Her Heart"***

An example of a headline accompanied by sexualised photographs published by *Tuttosport*.
<https://prismag.it/sexualizzazione-donne-giornalismo/>

Consideration:

The combination of sports reporting with sexualised imagery creates a narrative that values women athletes not only for their sporting achievements but also for their physical attractiveness. This framing reinforces the idea that women in sport must satisfy aesthetic expectations in addition to demonstrating athletic excellence, a standard rarely imposed on male athletes.

3. ***"Besides his girlfriend Flaminia, it is not excluded that Scamacca's sister Giulia will also attend the matches, charming social media with her curves and sensuality."***

Another example of a headline accompanied by sexualised photographs published by *SportMediaset*.
<https://prismag.it/sexualizzazione-donne-giornalismo/>



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Consideration:

The subordination of women's sport to men's sport and the reproduction of stereotypes regarding femininity and masculinity are reinforced by media representations, particularly through the use of images. Men are typically portrayed in athletic poses during competition or while performing their sport, whereas women are more frequently depicted in contexts unrelated to athletic performance. Furthermore, women's physical appearance is often emphasised more than their sporting abilities, and many female athletes receive media attention primarily because of their attractiveness rather than their achievements.

4. "I am a football fan, I am a man, I like watching football and I like associating it with a beautiful woman. The basis is that I need the beautiful girl, who can then be trained."

Statement by Michele Criscitiello, director of *SportItalia*, explaining the presence of "showgirls" in sports programmes.

<https://prismag.it/sexualizzazione-donne-giornalismo/>

Consideration:

This statement reflects the persistence of gender stereotypes within sports media environments, where women are often valued primarily for their appearance rather than their expertise or professional competence. Such representations reinforce the perception that women occupy decorative or supportive roles in sports communication, while authority and technical knowledge remain associated with men.

5. "The other pillar, although she does not have the physique for it, is the right winger: Cappella, a lively little blonde. She is the hard worker of the cheerful group. A huge heart, and eyes that reveal all the cleverness of this daring young girl, always ready for a joke."

Description of a female football player published by *La Gazzetta dello Sport*.

file:///C:/Users/Swami/Downloads/Giani_lingua+e+immagini+polemi che+giornalistiche%20(1).pdf

Consideration:



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The perception of which sports are appropriate for each gender stems from stereotypes that both reflect and reinforce socially constructed expectations about men and women. Sports associated with men tend to emphasise physicality, competitiveness, and strength, while sports associated with women are often framed around aesthetics, beauty, and grace. Such descriptions minimise athletic competence and reinforce traditional gender norms.

6. "Katie Ledecky, the Michael Phelps in a Skirt"

The Olympic swimming champion Katie Ledecky is compared to male swimmer Michael Phelps.

Consideration:

Sports narratives about women athletes frequently employ language that diminishes their achievements by comparing them to male athletes. Expressions such as "she plays like a man" or "the female version of..." imply that sporting excellence remains fundamentally associated with masculinity. Women's sport is therefore socially constructed as an alternative version of the "real" sport, which is implicitly considered male.

7. "Barbara Always Has Her Nails Ready, Painted Blue..."

<https://atletaibrido.it/donne-nello-sport-discriminazione-nello-sport/>
La Gazzetta dello Sport, 5 June 2023.

Consideration:

The issue is not limited to the quantity of media coverage devoted to women athletes; it also concerns the way they are represented. Media narratives frequently emphasise aspects unrelated to athletic performance, such as physical appearance, private life, or clothing. Headlines celebrating an athlete's beauty or elegance remain common even when significant sporting achievements deserve the spotlight. This narrative asymmetry reinforces a symbolic hierarchy in which men's sport is perceived as the norm and women's sport as an exception or secondary form of entertainment.

8. "Benedetta Pilato, the Princess of Breaststroke"

Headline about Italian swimmer Benedetta Pilato published by *La Repubblica*, 28 luglio 2019.

<https://atletaibrido.it/donne-nello-sport-discriminazione-nello-sport/>



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Consideration:

The use of infantilising or fairy-tale language such as “princess” can undermine the professional status of women athletes by portraying them through traditionally feminine and childlike stereotypes. While often intended as complimentary, such descriptions may divert attention from sporting excellence and contribute to a narrative that frames women athletes differently from their male counterpart

9. ***"Fantastic Flying Girls, What a Triple Victory in the 100 Metres!"***

La Gazzetta Sportiva, 2021

<https://www.calcioinpillola.com/in-prima-pagina-i-quotidiani-in-edicola-oggi-5-settembre-2021/>

Consideration:

This type of language can trivialise sporting success and make women's achievements appear less serious or prestigious than equivalent accomplishments by male athletes. The tone resembles that used for recreational or amateur events, diminishing the significance of elite-level competition and reinforcing unequal standards of recognition.

10. ***"Beautiful"***

Front-page headline by *La Gazzetta dello Sport* about tennis player Jasmine Paolini following her qualification for the Wimbledon final, 2024.

<https://www.quotidiano.net/luce/attualita/jasmine-paolini-bellissima-sinner-mito-omsfuhem>

Consideration:

Jasmine Paolini became the first Italian woman to reach a Wimbledon singles final, a historic sporting achievement. However, the headline focuses on her appearance rather than her performance. This reflects a broader tendency in sports media to prioritise aesthetics over competence when covering women athletes, thereby diminishing the visibility of their athletic accomplishments.

You can print this document directly and cut out each quote!

 **Headline Rewrite Lab MATERIALS**

Projector or screen for slides



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A3 paper

Markers or pens

Printed Rewriting Checklist (focus on athletic performance, inclusive language, removal of gender bias, and avoidance of appearance- or emotion-based framing). One copy should be provided to each participant group to support the headline analysis and rewriting exercise

Headline rewriting checklist:

Before rewriting a headline, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the headline focus primarily on the athlete's performance, achievement, skills, or sporting results?
☐ Yes
☐ No
2. Is the athlete's gender mentioned only when it is relevant to the story?
☐ Yes
☐ No
3. Does the headline avoid references to physical appearance, attractiveness, clothing, body shape, or age unless directly relevant to the sporting event?
☐ Yes
☐ No
4. Does the headline avoid unnecessary references to family roles, relationships, or private life?
☐ Yes
☐ No
5. Does the language avoid stereotypes associated with femininity or masculinity?
☐ Yes
☐ No
6. Would the same headline be considered appropriate if the athlete were of a different gender? (Gender-Swap Test)



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	☐ Yes ☐ No 7. Does the headline recognise the athlete primarily as a sport professional rather than through personal characteristics? ☐ Yes ☐ No 8. Is the language respectful, neutral, and free from infantilising expressions (e.g., "girl", "princess", "sweetheart")? ☐ Yes ☐ No 9. Does the headline avoid emotional framing that is not equally applied to male athletes? ☐ Yes ☐ No 10. Does the headline contribute to a fair and balanced representation of women athletes? ☐ Yes ☐ No Final Reflection: If you answered "No" to one or more questions, consider revising the headline to focus more clearly on sporting performance, professional achievements, and accurate representation. *You can print this document directly*:  Rewrite checklist MATERIAL
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Step-by-step description

Phase 1: Introduction and framing

The trainer briefly introduces the concept of narrative diversity and explains how sports media narratives can influence public perceptions of athletes and the follow exercise. The trainer explains that the goal of the activity is not simply to identify problematic language, but to learn how to transform it into fair, accurate, and performance-focused reporting.

The instructor will divide the participants into a maximum of 5 groups (of X people each, depending on the number of participants attending the training).

Each group will receive two of the 10 sports headlines or short media texts related to women athletes (those indicated above among the materials) printed and one print Headline Rewriting Checklist for each group with A3 sheets for the final activity.

Phase 2: Analysis using the Rewriting Checklist

Groups first analyse each headline or media texts.

For every headline analysed, groups should identify:

- Which checklist criteria are not respected.
- Which type of bias is present.
- Which words or expressions contribute to the biased framing.

Filling out the checklist!



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The trainer encourages groups to discuss their observations and reach a common interpretation.

Phase 3: Rewriting exercise

After identifying the problematic elements, each group rewrites the headlines following three key questions:

- What is the athlete's actual sporting achievement or action?
- Which words can be removed because they focus on appearance, emotions, or stereotypes rather than performance?
- How can the headline be rewritten to highlight competence, achievement, or sporting relevance?

Participants then produce a revised version of each headline.

The trainer reminds participants that the objective is not to make headlines longer or more complicated, but to make them more accurate, inclusive, and professionally relevant.

Example transformation:

“The emotional female athlete cries after missing the final shot”
→ “The athlete reflects on performance after match loss”

Phase 4: Presentation of group outputs and discussion

Each group presents one or two examples of their original and revised headlines: “before and after”.

For each example, participants explain:

- the type of bias they identified;
- the changes they made;
- how the revised version improves representation.

Group discussion

The trainer facilitates the discussion by referring to the considerations and examples previously provided in the training materials,



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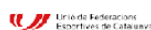


Isidorm
Fútbol. Calidad e Pasión

	encouraging participants to connect the identified patterns of bias with broader issues of gender representation, visibility, and stereotyping in sports media.
Debriefing and evaluation	The trainer concludes the activity by asking participants: • Which type of bias was easiest to identify? • Which type of bias was most difficult to rewrite? • How can journalists balance engaging storytelling with fair representation? • What practical lessons can be applied in their daily professional work? Success is achieved when participants demonstrate the ability to identify biased framing and transform it into performance-focused, inclusive, and accurate sports reporting.



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Recommendations (if any)

1. Encourage participants to apply the “Gender-Swap Test” throughout the activity.

Ask participants whether the same headline, description, or narrative framing would be considered appropriate if the athlete were a man. This exercise helps reveal implicit biases and double standards that often remain unnoticed in sports reporting.

2. Keep the focus on performance rather than intention.

The objective is not to judge journalists or media outlets, but to analyse how narratives are constructed and how they can be improved. Encourage participants to focus on the content itself rather than on the presumed intentions behind it.

3. Use real media examples whenever possible.

Real headlines, articles, social media posts, and broadcast commentary allow participants to engage with authentic cases and recognise how gender bias appears in everyday sports communication.

4. Encourage discussion and multiple interpretations.

Some examples may generate different opinions among participants. Trainers should facilitate constructive discussion and invite participants to justify their analyses using the criteria provided in the Rewriting Checklist.

5. Connect the exercise to participants’ professional contexts.

Invite journalists, communication officers, students, bloggers, and content creators to reflect on how similar biases may appear in their own work and how the tools presented in the workshop could be applied in practice.

6. Emphasise that inclusive language does not mean less engaging storytelling.



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	Participants should understand that accurate, fair, and performance-focused reporting can remain compelling and attractive to audiences while avoiding stereotypes and discriminatory framing. 7. If time allows, invite participants to analyse their own content. As a follow-up activity, participants may review recent articles, social media posts, headlines, or communication materials they have produced and evaluate them using the Rewriting Checklist. This can help translate learning outcomes into concrete professional practice.
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From Visibility to Invisibility: Gender Bias and Media Narratives in Professional Boxing

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Recognise how identical sporting performances can be framed differently based on gender.
- Analyse structural bias in sports journalism narratives.
- Reflect on how media framing influences visibility and legitimacy of athletes.

After completing the exercise, participants should be able to understand how sports media narratives do not simply describe athletic performance, but actively construct the visibility, legitimacy, and public perception of athletes. They will recognise how gendered framing operates through language choices, narrative emphasis, and thematic focus within sports journalism.

Participants will be able to identify and compare different forms of media representation, with particular attention to how male and female athletes are portrayed through distinct narrative patterns such as performance-based framing, emotionalisation, personal storytelling, and inspirational discourse. Through this process, they will develop a critical understanding of how these differences contribute to broader inequalities in the recognition, visibility, and valuation of women's sport.

By engaging with both media excerpts and a real-life athlete testimony,



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	participants will also explore how media representation is closely interconnected with structural and historical barriers in sport. They will understand that visibility is shaped not only by individual journalistic choices, but also by institutional and cultural conditions that influence access, recognition, and legitimacy within professional sport. By the end of the exercise, participants should be able to apply basic analytical tools to deconstruct sports media content, identify patterns of bias and imbalance, and reflect on possible ways to reframe sports narratives in a more balanced, accurate, and performance-oriented direction, contributing to more equitable and responsible media practices.
Case Study Summary	Participants analyse different forms of sports media representation through a comparative case study focused on professional boxing. In the first part of the activity, participants compare media coverage and interview excerpts and headlines related to Katie Taylor and Canelo Álvarez. Although both athletes are internationally recognised boxing champions, the narratives used to describe them differ significantly. Coverage related to male athletes predominantly focuses on: • performance and results • strategy and competitiveness • technical analysis Coverage related to female athletes more frequently emphasises: • emotional reactions • personal journey • inspirational qualities • gender-related narratives In the second part of the activity, participants analyse a video testimony in which Katie Taylor explains that, at the beginning of her career, women's boxing was not officially recognised in Ireland. In order to participate in fights, she had to disguise herself as a boy,

	compete under the name “Kay Taylor”, and hide her identity during competitions. Participants examine how media narratives and institutional barriers shape visibility, legitimacy, and recognition in sport.
Timeframe	Total duration: 60 minutes • 20 minutes – Reading and comparison • 20 minutes – Group analysis • 20 minutes – Group presentation and reflection
Materials	<u>Media text, Headlines, Interview/video excerpts featuring Katie Taylor:</u> https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/nov/29/katie-taylor-i-definitely-come-from-a-strong-line-of-great-women-boxing?utm_source https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/nov/29/katie-taylor-i-definitely-come-from-a-strong-line-of-great-women-boxing?utm_source https://youtube.com/shorts/XMva2YGLCTw?si=I912t36dVg_H5YvV <u>Media excerpts/interviews featuring Canelo Álvarez</u> https://www.boxingnewsandviews.com/2025/06/23/canelo-on-why-i-ts-not-always-about-punching-power/?utm_source https://www.boxing247.com/boxing-news/canelo-alvarez-says-no-fighter-can-match-what-he-generates/304845 https://www.ringmagazine.com/news/canelo-alvarez-believes-he-remain-s-boxing-s-biggest-star-3KYUAW7CnMvQsQLTY1fmV4 • *You can print this document directly*:  Case study MATERIALS <u>Video testimony from Katie Taylor’s interview</u> https://youtu.be/68YTmXiVnU0?si=H0aAHfEa4RKjwT2n <u>Papers</u>

	<u>Markers, pens</u> <u>Projector or screen for slides and video viewing</u>
Step-by-step description	<u>Preparation before the activity</u> The trainer divides participants into a maximum of five groups, with each group consisting of a number of participants based on the number of participants present during the training. Each group is provided with printed materials, including headlines, interview excerpts, and short narrative descriptions related to Katie Taylor and Canelo Álvarez, as well as paper for note-taking. All materials are pre-selected and included in the section “Materials”. (The only material not to be considered in this first phase is the Video testimony from Katie Taylor’s interview, which will be useful to us in phase two!!) Phase 1: Introduction and guided comparative analysis The trainer introduces the purpose of the activity, explaining that participants will analyze how sports media narratives differ depending on the athlete's gender and how this impacts visibility and legitimacy in sport. Each group is provided with the same printed set of materials (titles, excerpts, and short texts) and is asked to analyse them using the following guiding questions, presented by the trainer and visible on slides: - How is Canelo Álvarez described compared to Katie Taylor? - What aspects of performance, personality, or identity are emphasized in each case? - What type of language dominates in each representation? The trainer supports the discussion by referring to narrative models pre-identified in previous exercises (e.g., "Let's think about the performance-based framing vs. the emotional/motivational framing we talked about earlier..."), helping participants structure their analysis without resorting to digital tools. Participants are asked to note down their key observations on paper.

	Phase 2: Video testimony analysis Participants watch the Video testimony from Katie Taylor’s interview https://youtu.be/68YTmXiVnU0?si=H0aAHfEa4RKjwT2n (projected on screen via YouTube) in which Katie Taylor describes the early stages of her career, when women's boxing was not officially recognized in Ireland and she had to disguise herself as a boy to compete. After viewing, each group discusses the guiding questions provided by the trainer (visible via slides on the screen): - What does this testimony reveal about access and recognition in sport? - How do institutional barriers influence the visibility of female athletes? The trainer facilitates a brief plenary reflection, connecting media narratives to structural conditions in sport. Phase 3: Group synthesis and presentation Each group presents its main reflections based on the guiding questions listed in the paragraph below. The trainer concludes by highlighting recurring patterns across the groups and connecting them to the broader learning objectives of the module, particularly the relationship between visibility, legitimacy, and gender representation in sports media.
Guiding Questions	Guiding Questions <u>(with indicative answers for trainers)</u> - How could this affect sponsorship and media visibility? Participants are expected to recognise that gendered media framing can directly influence the commercial value and visibility of athletes. When female athletes are predominantly represented through emotional, personal, or appearance-based narratives rather than performance, their perceived professional legitimacy may be reduced. This can result in fewer sponsorship opportunities, lower media exposure, and unequal commercial investment compared to male

	athletes, whose representation is more consistently performance-oriented. - What types of language reduce the visibility of the female athlete's performance? Participants should identify that language focusing on appearance, emotions, personal life, or inspirational framing can shift attention away from athletic performance. Expressions that infantilise athletes, emphasise femininity, or highlight private aspects rather than sporting achievement contribute to reducing the perception of competence and professional status. Comparative or diminutive language (e.g. references to "girl", "princess", or emotional framing unrelated to competition) should also be highlighted as problematic. - What does Katie Taylor's testimony reveal about structural barriers in sport? Participants are expected to understand that gender inequality in sport is not only a media issue but also a structural one. Katie Taylor's experience illustrates historical exclusion from formal competition systems, lack of institutional recognition, and the need to bypass gender norms in order to participate. This highlights how access to sport itself has been shaped by institutional and cultural barriers that continue to influence visibility and recognition today. - How does media framing influence public perception and legitimacy of athletes? Participants should recognise that media framing shapes how audiences interpret athletic performance and value athletes. Performance-based framing tends to reinforce legitimacy, professionalism, and authority, while emotional or stereotypical framing can diminish perceived seriousness and competence. Media narratives therefore play a key role in constructing which athletes are seen as "elite", "professional", or "secondary" within sport culture. - In what ways can journalism reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes? Participants are expected to reflect on the dual role of journalism. On one hand, it can reinforce stereotypes through repetitive framing patterns, biased language, and unequal visibility. On the other hand, journalism can challenge stereotypes by adopting inclusive language, focusing on performance and achievement, diversifying sources, and applying gender-sensitive editorial practices. This question should
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	encourage awareness of journalism as an active agent in either reproducing or transforming gender norms in sport.
Debriefing and evaluation	The debriefing phase focuses on consolidating participants' understanding of how sports media narratives and institutional conditions jointly contribute to the unequal visibility and recognition of athletes in professional sport. The aim is to move from content analysis to a broader reflection on how meaning is produced through language, editorial decisions, and structural contexts. Participants are guided to reflect on the following dimensions: • how performance-based and gendered narratives differ in sports journalism • how editorial and linguistic choices shape public perception of athletes • the relationship between visibility, legitimacy, and access to professional opportunities in sport • how structural and historical barriers continue to affect women athletes' participation and recognition • how media framing can reinforce or challenge existing gender stereotypes in sport The trainer facilitates a collective discussion linking the findings from the comparative analysis and the video testimony, highlighting how individual media texts reflect broader systems of representation. The learning outcome is considered achieved when participants are able to recognise that media bias operates both at the level of narrative construction (language, framing, storytelling choices) and at the level of structural conditions that influence who is visible, how they are represented, and under which terms their achievements are legitimised in sport. Participants are also encouraged to briefly translate their reflections into practice by identifying one concrete way sports journalism could improve the balance and accuracy of athlete representation. <u>Final Question:</u>



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	What is one practice you would like to change or improve in your way of reporting or communicating about athletes?
Recommendations (if any)	Emphasise that narrative framing is an editorial decision, not a neutral reflection of reality. Changing language changes visibility.

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MODULE 3: Structural Balance in Sports Media

Introduction

Structural imbalance in sports media refers to the systemic and institutional factors that influence how sports content is selected, produced, and distributed. These include editorial decision-making processes, organisational structures, economic priorities, and power dynamics within media organisations.

While gender inequality in sports media is often visible through differences in language, narratives, or imagery, it is primarily driven by deeper structural mechanisms that determine whose stories are told, how frequently they are covered, and how they are framed. In addition, structural imbalance also exists within the sports media sector itself, which remains largely male-dominated, particularly in decision-making positions such as editors, editorial directors, producers, and senior management. These structural realities can influence editorial priorities, news values, story selection, and the overall visibility of women's sports and women athletes. As a result, they contribute to the persistent underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women athletes in sports media.

This module aims to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of how media systems operate and how these systems can unintentionally reproduce gender bias. By exploring the relationship between visibility, commercial value, editorial priorities, and institutional practices, participants will be able to critically assess the root causes of gender imbalance in sports coverage.

Understanding structural imbalance is essential for promoting gender equality in sports media, as it shifts the focus from individual actions to systemic change. This enables media professionals to move beyond awareness and take informed, responsible action within their professional environments.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Understand the concept of structural imbalance in sports media
- Identify key systemic factors influencing gender inequality in media coverage



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- Recognise how editorial decisions, economic drivers, and organisational practices shape representation
- Analyse the relationship between visibility, investment, and media agendas
- Reflect critically on their own professional role in shaping sports media content

Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, participants will have gained:

- Awareness of the structural drivers of gender bias in sports media
- Ability to identify patterns of imbalance within media systems and institutions
- Critical understanding of how sports media coverage is produced and prioritised
- Ability to apply analytical thinking to real-life media scenarios
- Ability to identify practical measures that media organisations can implement to reduce structural gender imbalance in sports coverage.

Exercise/Training Method

Editorial Decisions Under Pressure: Understanding Structural Imbalance in Sports Media	
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this exercise, participants will have gained: • Understanding of how editorial decisions are influenced by structural factors • Awareness of how gender bias can emerge unintentionally in decision-making processes • Ability to identify the role of economic, organisational, and audience-related pressures in shaping media coverage • Critical thinking skills in selecting and prioritising sports content • Capacity to reflect on how to make more balanced and inclusive editorial choices
Timeframe	Total: 90 minutes • Introduction & briefing – 10 min • Group simulation exercise – 35 min • Presentation of results – 20 min • Debriefing & discussion – 25 min
Materials	• Printed or digital “Editorial Scenario Pack” (prepared in advance) • Flipchart or whiteboard • Markers or pens



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	• Timer Optional: slides with background context
Step-by-step description	Preparation (Trainer) Before the session, the trainer prepares: • A fictional but realistic sports media scenario, including: - o List of 10–12 potential sports stories (mixed male/female coverage - see end of the document) - o Audience data (e.g. “higher engagement with men’s football”) - o Sponsor interests - o Time/space limitations (e.g. only 5 stories can be selected) Step 1 – Introduction (10 min) The trainer briefly explains: • What “structural imbalance” means • That participants will simulate a real editorial meeting • The goal: select stories for a sports media outlet Step 2 – Group Work: Editorial Simulation (35 min) Participants are divided into small groups (3–5 people). Each group acts as an editorial team and must: • Review the available stories • Select 5 stories for publication • Justify their choices based on: - o audience interest - o relevance - o impact - o commercial value Important: No mention of gender is required at this stage — decisions should feel “natural”. Step 3 – Presentation of Results (20 min) Each group presents: • Their selected stories • Their reasoning • The trainer writes results on the board (e.g. number of women vs men stories selected). Step 4 – Reveal & Reflection (guided by trainer) The trainer introduces reflection: • What percentage of selected stories focused on women?

	Were women's sports deprioritised? Why?
Debriefing and evaluation	Guiding Questions The trainer leads discussion using questions such as: - What factors influenced your editorial decisions the most? - Did you identify any patterns in the stories selected? - Were audience expectations or commercial interests prioritised? - How can structural factors influence representation without intentional bias? - What actions can media organisations take to promote greater structural balance? Evaluation of Learning Learning objectives are considered achieved if participants: - Recognise that their decisions were influenced by structural factors - Acknowledge the existence of unconscious bias - Demonstrate ability to critically reflect on editorial practices - Suggest alternative, more inclusive decision-making approaches
Recommendations (if any)	- Ensure a safe and open environment — avoid blaming participants - Encourage honest reflection rather than “correct answers” - Adapt difficulty depending on participant experience (students vs professionals) - Use real data/examples where possible to increase relevance - If time allows, repeat the exercise with adjusted conditions (e.g. equality targets) to compare results

The Visibility Gap: Why Women's Sport Struggles to Make Headlines

Learning Outcomes	After this exercise, participants will have gained: - Ability to identify structural factors influencing unequal media coverage - Ability to analyse how editorial priorities and market logic shape visibility
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	• Understanding of the relationship between media exposure, investment, and audience perception • Critical thinking skills to evaluate real-world media scenarios • Capacity to propose practical strategies to improve gender balance in sports media
Case Study Summary	This case study focuses on the persistent visibility gap between men's and women's sport in media coverage. Participants will analyse a simplified dataset and scenario inspired by real-world research, where: • Women's sport receives significantly less coverage than men's sport • Media organisations justify this imbalance based on audience demand and commercial value • Increased visibility only occurs during major events (e.g. Olympic Games) The main challenge is to understand: • Is this imbalance driven by audience demand... or by structural decisions within media organisations? • Participants will explore how editorial practices, economic pressures, and institutional habits contribute to reinforcing this cycle.
Timeframe	Total: 60 minutes • Reading & individual reflection – 10 min • Group discussion – 25 min • Presentation of results – 10 min • Debriefing – 15 min
Materials	• Printed or digital case study text (prepared in advance) • Data sheet (simplified statistics provided by trainer) • Flipchart or whiteboard • Markers
Step-by-step description	Step 1 – Introduction & Reading (10 min) Participants receive the case study, including: • Basic data (e.g. % of coverage women vs men) • Description of a media organisation's editorial strategy • Short explanation of audience trends • Participants read individually. Step 2 – Group Discussion (25 min) Participants are divided into small groups (3–5 people). Each group analyses the case and discusses: • Why the imbalance exists

	• What factors influence editorial decisions • Who is responsible for the current situation Step 3 – Group Presentations (10 min) Each group shares: • Their main findings • Key factors identified • Possible solutions • Trainer notes common patterns across groups.
Guiding Questions	The group should discuss: • Why does visibility increase during major events? • Why does it decline afterwards? • What structural factors contribute to this cycle? • Is audience demand the cause of unequal visibility, or is it partly shaped by media organisations? • What actions could promote more balanced and sustainable coverage?
Debriefing and evaluation	Reflection Questions • Why does women's sport receive greater visibility during major events? • What happens once these events end? • Which structural factors contribute to this cycle? • Is audience demand the cause of unequal visibility, or is it partly shaped by media organisations? • What role do editorial priorities and commercial interests play? • What practical actions could help achieve more balanced and sustainable coverage throughout the year? Evaluation of Learning Learning objectives are achieved if participants: • Identify structural (not only individual) causes of inequality • Recognise the role of media systems in shaping visibility • Demonstrate critical thinking when analysing the case • Suggest realistic and applicable improvements

Recommendations (if any)	• Use real national data where possible to increase relevance • Adapt the complexity depending on the target group • Encourage participants to relate the case to their own experience • Avoid framing the discussion as “right vs wrong” — focus on understanding systems • If time allows, ask participants to redesign the editorial strategy in a second round
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Supporting Materials & Handouts

Sports Media Scenario

Each scenario should be adapted to the reality of each country. Below you can find one example:

Context

You are the editorial team of an international digital sports media outlet: “Global Sport Media Hub”

- Platform: Website + Social Media
- Audience: Global (Europe, Asia, Americas)
- Target group: 18–45 years old
- Content focus: Football, Olympic sports, global competitions

Your role is to decide which stories will be published and promoted based on editorial, commercial, and audience priorities.

Available Stories

Men’s Sport

1. UEFA Champions League semi-final: top European clubs face off
2. National football league title race – final matchday analysis
3. Global football star breaks international scoring record
4. Transfer market update: major player linked to top club
5. Injury update: key player ahead of international tournament

Women’s Sport



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6. UEFA Women's Champions League semi-final: top European teams
7. National women's team qualifies for a major international competition
8. Interview: rising female athlete preparing for the Olympic Games
9. Women's basketball team wins national championship
10. Female tennis player reaches Grand Slam semi-final

Mixed / Other

11. Olympic Games preparation: overview of national athletes (men and women)
12. Debate: equal prize money in international sport competitions

Audience Data

- 65% of total engagement comes from men's football content
- Women's sport represents approximately 15% of total clicks
- However:
 - Women's sport content has a higher engagement rate per post
 - Younger audiences (18–25) engage more with women's sport
- Major events (e.g. Olympic Games) significantly increase visibility of women athletes

Sponsor Interests

Main sponsor: Global Sports Brand

- Priorities:
 - High visibility and engagement
 - Strong preference for football-related content
- Current campaign:
 - Focus on "Women in Sport"
 - Interest in including at least 1–2 women's sport stories

Editorial Constraints

- Only 5 stories can be published on the homepage
- Only 3 stories can be strongly promoted on social media
- Limited time for decision-making
- Content must balance:
 - audience interest
 - relevance
 - commercial value

Task for Participants



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In your group, act as an editorial team.

You have 12 available stories, but due to editorial constraints, you must:

1. Select ONLY 5 stories to publish on the homepage
2. From those 5, choose ONLY 3 stories to promote on social media
3. Justify your decisions based on:
 - audience data
 - editorial relevance
 - commercial considerations

Trainer notes (hidden from participants)

These stories are intentionally constructed to reproduce common editorial tensions:

- High commercial value vs equal representation
- Viral/scandal content vs sporting achievement
- Established men's sports vs emerging women's sports
- Audience assumptions vs public-interest journalism

You can also prepare:

- Fake click projections
- Sponsor emails
- Social media metrics
- Breaking-news pressure

to make the simulation even more realistic.

Case Study Text

The Olympic Effect: Why Does Women's Sport Only Matter During Major Events?

Background

Over the last decade, women's participation in sport has continued to increase worldwide. Major international competitions such as the Olympic Games, FIFA Women's World Cup, UEFA Women's



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EURO, and Women's Champions League have attracted growing audiences, sponsorship investment, and media attention.

However, research consistently shows that this visibility is often temporary.

Research conducted within the POWER project found that women's sport receives significantly greater visibility during major events, but coverage often declines sharply once these events conclude.

For example:

- During regular sports seasons, women's sport often represents only 15–20% of total sports coverage.
- During the Olympic Games, coverage can rise to over 40%.
- Following the event, visibility frequently returns to previous levels.

Media organisations often explain this pattern by referring to audience demand, available resources, and commercial priorities.

Critics argue that media organisations themselves help shape audience interests through editorial decisions, promotional efforts, and long-term investment in coverage.

As a result, an important debate has emerged:

Why does visibility increase during major events but fail to remain consistent throughout the year?

Supporting Data

Coverage of Women's Sport Throughout the Year

Period	Women's Sport Coverage
Regular Season	15–20%
Women's World Cup	30–40%
Olympic Games	40–45%
Post-Event Period	15–20%

Editorial Priorities Reported by Media Organisations



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- Greater investment in major international events
- Preference for content perceived as generating higher audience traffic
- Limited newsroom resources
- Strong competition for homepage space
- Greater commercial investment in established men's competitions

Emerging Trends

- Growing participation of women and girls in sport
- Increasing interest from younger audiences
- Stronger sponsor commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Higher engagement rates for some women's sport content

Challenge

You have been appointed to an internal working group within an international sports media organisation.

Your task is to analyse the information provided and prepare recommendations for the editorial board.

Specifically:

- Why does visibility increase during major events?
- Why does it decline afterwards?
- What structural factors contribute to this cycle?
- What actions could media organisations take to achieve more balanced and sustainable coverage of women's sport?
- Based on your discussion, develop three practical recommendations that a sports media organisation could implement to improve the year-round visibility and representation of women athletes.

Trainer notes (hidden from participants)

The purpose of these questions is to encourage discussion and critical reflection. There are no right or wrong answers. Participants may reach different conclusions depending on their experiences, professional backgrounds, and national contexts. The following points are provided as possible answers and examples to support the discussion and help facilitators guide the activity if needed.

Why does visibility increase during major events?



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Possible answers may include:

- Major events attract larger audiences and greater media attention.
- Broadcasters and media organisations invest more resources in international competitions.
- National success stories generate public interest and emotional engagement.
- Sponsors increase investment and promotional efforts during major events.
- Women's sport is often considered more newsworthy during high-profile competitions.
- Events such as the Olympic Games and Women's World Cups provide greater exposure and media access.
- Media outlets prioritise stories expected to generate higher audience engagement.

Why does it decline afterwards?

Possible answers may include:

- Media attention shifts back to established competitions, particularly men's football.
- Editorial priorities often favour content perceived as generating more traffic and engagement.
- Women's competitions receive less promotion and fewer dedicated resources throughout the year.
- There is often no long-term editorial strategy to maintain visibility after major events.
- Sponsorship and commercial interest may decrease once major events conclude.
- Existing audience habits continue to reinforce the dominance of men's sport coverage.
- Newsrooms often return to traditional coverage patterns and routines.

What structural factors contribute to this cycle?

Possible answers may include:

Editorial Factors

- Editorial priorities and news selection processes.
- Lack of diversity among decision-makers.
- Limited commitment to year-round coverage of women's sport.
- Absence of internal targets or policies promoting balanced representation.

Commercial Factors

- Sponsorship interests.
- Advertising revenue considerations.
- Pressure to maximise audience engagement and digital traffic.



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Organisational Factors

- Limited resources dedicated to women's sport coverage.
- Lack of specialised journalists covering women's sport.
- Absence of monitoring and accountability systems.

Cultural Factors

- Historical dominance of men's sport.
- Audience expectations shaped by years of unequal coverage.
- Persistent stereotypes regarding the popularity and value of women's sport.

Visibility Factors

- Limited promotion of women's competitions.
- Reduced broadcast opportunities.
- Lack of storytelling beyond major events and medal-winning performances.

What actions could media organisations take to achieve more balanced and sustainable coverage of women's sport?

Possible answers may include:

- Develop year-round editorial plans for women's sport.
- Establish minimum coverage or visibility targets.
- Diversify coverage beyond men's football.
- Promote women's sport consistently across social media platforms.
- Feature women athletes, coaches, and experts as regular contributors and commentators.
- Invest in dedicated journalists and content creators covering women's sport.
- Build partnerships with sports federations, clubs, and sponsors.
- Use performance-focused and non-stereotypical storytelling.
- Monitor gender representation and publish progress reports.
- Ensure balanced homepage placement and headline visibility.

Based on your discussion, develop three practical recommendations that a sports media organisation could implement to improve the year-round visibility and representation of women athletes.

Examples of possible recommendations include:

Recommendation 1 – Introduce a Year-Round Women's Sport Editorial Plan

Create an editorial calendar that ensures regular coverage of women's competitions, athletes, and stories throughout the year rather than focusing only on major events.

Recommendation 2 – Establish Internal Visibility Targets

Set measurable targets for the representation of women athletes, women's competitions, and female experts across articles, broadcasts, and social media content.

Recommendation 3 – Diversify Storytelling and Promotion

Expand coverage beyond competition results by highlighting leadership, career journeys, training processes, community impact, and personal achievements, supported by consistent social media promotion.

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MODULE 4: Visual Representation in Sports Media

Introduction

Visual representation plays a central role in how athletes are perceived, remembered, and valued. In sports media, images, videos, thumbnails, camera angles, captions, and social media visuals do not simply illustrate a story; they actively shape the story. They influence whether an athlete is seen as powerful, professional, fierce, decorative, emotional, passive or weak.

The POWER Strategy identifies visual representation as one of the key gaps in the fair portrayal of women athletes. They are often underrepresented visually or shown through static, neutral, passive, aestheticised or even sexualized imagery. This contrasts with the more dynamic and performance-oriented portrayal often used for male athletes, where action, intensity, strength, and competitiveness are emphasized.

This module supports participants in recognising how visual choices can reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes. It focuses on practical decision-making: selecting photos, cropping images, designing social media thumbnails, pairing visuals with captions, and ensuring visual diversity across sports, body types, ages, abilities and roles.

The aim is not to prescribe one single visual style, but to help journalists, editors, photographers, content creators, and sport communication staff make conscious, ethical, and inclusive visual choices. Participants will learn to move from passive or objectifying representation towards visuals that show women athletes in action, leadership, professionalism, and authentic sporting contexts.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of visual representation in shaping perceptions of women athletes
- Recognize how images, videos, thumbnails, and captions can reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes
- Identify biased, passive, objectifying, or decontextualised visual portrayals in sports media
- Apply practical criteria for selecting dynamic, professional, diverse, and empowering visuals
- Reflect critically on their own visual choices, regardless of the communications role they have in sport



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Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, participants will have gained:

- Awareness of the impact of visual framing on the portrayal of women athletes
- Ability to analyse visual sports content from a gender-sensitive perspective
- Capacity to identify patterns of imbalance in image selection, cropping, positioning, captions, and platform use
- Practical skills in applying a visual checklist to produce more inclusive and non-stereotypical sports content
- Understanding of how to propose and implement realistic improvements for visual standards in media outlets, sport organisations, and digital communication channels

Exercise/Training Method

This module includes one non-formal education workshop and one case study exercise. Both activities are designed to fit within a 3-hour training module and to support practical application of the POWER visual representation guidelines.

Visual Choices Lab: Selecting images for fair sports coverage	
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this exercise, participants will have gained: · Ability to analyse sports images from a gender-sensitive perspective · Understanding of the differences between action-based, professional, passive, and objectifying imagery · Awareness of how cropping, angle, context, and captioning influence meaning · Practical skills in applying visual criteria when selecting images for articles, posts, and campaigns · Critical understanding of how visual decisions affect visibility, credibility, and audience perception



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Timeframe	Total: 90 minutes · Introduction and briefing - 10 min · Individual image assessment - 15 min · Group selection and redesign task - 30 min · Presentation of results - 25 min · Debriefing and discussion - 10 min
Materials	· Printed or digital “Visual Scenario Pack” prepared in advance · A set of 12-16 sports visuals showing different athletes, sports, angles, poses, and contexts · Visual Representation Checklist handout · Flipchart or whiteboard · Markers or pens · Optional: laptops or phones for reviewing thumbnails and social media layouts



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Step-by-step description

Preparation (Trainer)

- Before the session, the trainer prepares a visual pack containing mixed examples of female athletes: action shots, podium moments, training photos, posed portraits, passive images, sexualised or aestheticised images, images with poor cropping, and images with strong captions.
- The trainer should avoid using humiliating or explicit examples. If problematic visuals are used, they should be selected carefully and discussed respectfully.

Step 1 - Introduction (10 min)

- The trainer briefly explains that visual representation is not neutral. Participants are introduced to the POWER principle: "Show her power, not her pose."
- The trainer presents the core visual criteria: action, professionalism, relevance, diversity, dignity, context, and accuracy.

Step 2 - Individual Image Assessment (15 min)

- Participants receive 6-8 images and assess each one using the Visual Representation Checklist.
- They identify which visuals are empowering, which are problematic, and why.

Step 3 - Group Work: Image Selection and Redesign (30 min)

- Participants are divided into small groups of 3-5 people. Each group acts as the editorial/social media team of a sports outlet or sport organisation.
- Each group receives a fictional article or campaign brief and must select 3 visuals from the pack: one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail.
- Groups must justify their choices and, if needed, suggest improvements such as a better crop, a stronger caption, or a different visual angle.

Step 4 - Presentation of Results (20 min)

- Each group presents its selected visuals and explains the reasoning behind each choice.
- The trainer records common criteria on the board: action, emotion, skill, diversity, relevance, and avoidance of stereotypes.

Step 5 - Reflection (15 min)



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	· The trainer leads a discussion on how visual choices can influence credibility, audience engagement, and the perceived value of women's sport.
Debriefing and evaluation	Guiding Questions · What made an image feel professional, empowering, or respectful? · Which images focused on performance, skill, and sporting context? · Were any images passive, decorative, sexualised, or unrelated to athletic performance? · How did cropping or camera angle change the message of the image? · Would the same type of image be used for a male athlete in a similar story? · How can captions either reinforce or correct biased visual framing? Evaluation of Learning Learning objectives are considered achieved if participants can identify visual bias, explain how visual choices shape meaning, and propose practical improvements for image selection and captioning.
Recommendations	· Create a safe learning environment: visual analysis should focus on media practice, not on judging athletes' bodies or personal appearance. · Use national or sport-specific examples where possible to increase relevance. · Include both problematic and positive examples, so participants learn what to avoid and what to replicate. · Encourage participants to use the same visual criteria for women's and men's sport coverage. · Facultative: if time allows, repeat the task with social media posts only, focusing on thumbnails, captions, and platform-specific crops.

The Thumbnail Problem: When Engagement Metrics Shape Visual Bias	
Learning Outcomes	After this exercise, participants will have gained: · Ability to analyse how digital platforms and engagement metrics influence visual choices · Awareness of how thumbnails and social media images can reproduce gender stereotypes · Ability to evaluate the tension between clickability, editorial ethics, and fair representation · Practical skills in applying inclusive visual standards to a real-life digital communication scenario · Capacity to propose practical rules for selecting fair thumbnails and campaign visuals
Case Study Summary	This case study focuses on a fictional but realistic digital sports outlet preparing coverage of a women's championship final. · The editorial team has several available visual options: a powerful action shot, a trophy celebration, a posed portrait, a close-up emotional image, a training photo, and an aesthetic lifestyle image from the athlete's social media profile. · Previous analytics suggest that close-up emotional images and lifestyle-style thumbnails receive higher clicks, while action shots receive stronger engagement from sport-specific audiences. · The main challenge is to decide whether the outlet should prioritise click-through rate or fair, accurate, performance-based representation. · Participants will explore how digital media logic can unintentionally encourage stereotypical or decontextualised visuals and how organisations can develop better standards without ignoring audience engagement.
Timeframe	Total: 60 minutes · Reading and individual reflection - 10 min · Group discussion and thumbnail selection - 25 min · Presentation of results - 10 min · Debriefing - 15 min



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Materials	· Printed or digital case study text · Thumbnail option sheet · Simplified analytics sheet · Visual Representation Checklist · Flipchart or whiteboard · Markers
Step-by-step description	Step 1 - Introduction and Reading (10 min) · Participants receive the case study, including the story brief, thumbnail options, audience data, and editorial constraints. · Participants read individually and mark the thumbnail they would select first. Step 2 - Group Discussion (20 min) · Participants are divided into groups of 3-5 people. Each group must choose one thumbnail for the website homepage and one for social media promotion. · Groups must justify their choices using both audience data and fair representation principles. · They must also write a short caption or post text that strengthens the performance-based framing of the chosen visual. Step 3 - Group Presentations (20 min) · Each group presents its selected thumbnails, caption, and reasoning. · The trainer notes whether groups prioritised engagement, fairness, sporting relevance, or a balance of these factors. Step 4 - Debriefing (10 min) · The trainer leads a discussion on how visual standards can be integrated into everyday editorial workflows.

Guiding Questions	· Which thumbnail best represents the athlete as a professional competitor? · Which thumbnail is most likely to attract clicks, and why? · Would the same thumbnail logic be applied to a men's championship final? · How can captions help avoid emotional, aesthetic, or stereotypical framing? · What minimum visual standards should a newsroom or sports organisation adopt?
Debriefing and evaluation	Reflection Questions · Did your group change its first choice after applying the visual checklist? · What was the hardest trade-off: engagement, accuracy, aesthetics, or fairness? · How do platform formats, such as square crops or vertical videos, affect representation? · What internal rule would prevent biased thumbnail selection in your organisation? Evaluation of Learning Learning objectives are achieved if participants can explain the influence of engagement metrics, identify risks of stereotypical visual framing, and propose a practical visual standard for digital content.
Recommendations	· Use simplified data so participants do not get lost in analytics and can focus on the ethical decision-making process. · Encourage participants to compare how similar stories about male and female athletes are visually presented. · Adapt the case study to a federation, club, event campaign, or journalism context, and include a follow-up task in which participants redesign a real headline–image–caption combination to apply the concepts in a practical setting."

Supporting Materials & Handouts

Visual Representation Checklist

This checklist can be used during both exercises and later in professional practice before publishing a photo, video thumbnail, campaign image, or social media visual.

Criterion	Guiding question	Check
Performance and action	Does the visual show the athlete in a sporting context, demonstrating skill, strength, movement, focus, or competition?	☐
Professionalism and dignity	Would the same visual style be considered appropriate and respectful for a male athlete in a comparable story?	☐
Relevance	Does the image directly relate to the story, event, sport, or achievement being covered?	☐
Avoidance of objectification	Does the visual avoid unnecessary focus on body parts, appearance, sexuality, or decorative posing?	☐
Diversity	Do the selected visuals reflect different sports, roles, ages, body types, abilities, and backgrounds over time?	☐
Agency	Does the athlete appear as an active subject of the story rather than a passive object of observation?	☐
Caption alignment	Does the caption reinforce performance, achievement, leadership, and context rather than stereotypes?	☐
Platform suitability	Does the crop, thumbnail, or format preserve dignity, sporting context, and clarity on digital platforms?	☐



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Visual Scenario Pack

Each scenario should be adapted to the reality of each country and to the available media examples. Below you can find one example that trainers may use or modify.

Context

You are the digital editorial and social media team of an international sports platform: “Global Sport Media Hub”.

- Platform: website, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube Shorts
- Audience: global, with strong engagement among 18-35-year-old users
- Content focus: football, Olympic sports, women’s competitions, and athlete stories
- Task: select visuals for coverage of a major women’s championship final and a profile of one leading athlete

Available Visual Options

- 1. Action shot: athlete sprinting, jumping, shooting, tackling, serving, or competing at full intensity
- 2. Team celebration after winning a match or qualifying for a final
- 3. Athlete giving tactical instructions as captain or leader during a match
- 4. Training image showing preparation, focus, and technical skill
- 5. Posed portrait in sports kit with neutral background
- 6. Emotional close-up after victory or defeat
- 7. Cropped image focusing mainly on the athlete’s body rather than the sporting action
- 8. Lifestyle image taken from social media, not directly related to the competition
- 9. Podium or medal ceremony image
- 10. Mixed image showing athlete with coach, teammates, and sport context

Audience Data

- Action shots receive moderate click-through rates but strong engagement from sport-focused followers.
- Emotional close-ups receive high clicks but can encourage narrow framing if used without context.
- Lifestyle-style images may perform well on social media but risk shifting attention away from athletic performance.
- Posts showing teamwork, leadership, and celebration receive strong sharing rates among younger audiences.



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- Images with clear sporting context are more likely to be reused by partner organisations and clubs.

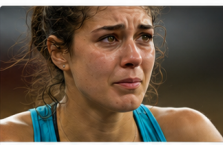
Editorial Constraints

- Only one homepage image can be selected.
- Only one social media thumbnail can be selected.
- The same athlete has already been covered several times with posed portraits.
- The editor wants the post to perform well, but the organisation has committed to fair representation principles.

Task for Participants

- Select one homepage image and one social media thumbnail.
- Write a short caption or post text for each selected visual.
- Explain which visuals you rejected and why.
- Identify one internal rule that would improve future visual selection.

POWER Module 4 – Visual Scenario Pack

POWER Module 4 – Visual Choices Lab

Fictional Article & Campaign Briefs for Group Work

Training objective: participants work as editorial, communications, or social media teams and select visuals that represent women athletes fairly, professionally, and powerfully. Each group receives one brief and chooses three visuals from the Visual Scenario Pack: one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail.

Instructions for Participants

- Read your assigned fictional article or campaign brief.
- Choose one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
- Use the Visual Representation Checklist to discuss whether the image shows performance, professionalism, relevance, dignity, diversity, agency, caption alignment, and platform suitability.
- Prepare a 3–4 minute group presentation explaining your choices and rejected options.

Questions to Guide Your Decision

- Why did you choose this visual?
- What message does it send about the athlete or women's sport?
- Does it show performance, professionalism, leadership, skill, emotion, or context?
- Could the same visual style be used for a male athlete in a similar story?
- Which visuals did you reject and why?
- Would you change the crop, caption, or format before publishing?



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Brief 1 – Championship Final Preview

Context	Your organisation is publishing a preview article before the final of a major women's football championship. The article focuses on the intensity of the competition, tactical preparation, and leadership of the team captain.
Target audience	General sports fans, young people aged 18–35, and followers of women's football.
Main message	Women's sport is competitive, tactical, professional, and exciting.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include action, leadership, team celebration, training, or coach-athlete context.
Discussion challenge	The editor suggests using an emotional close-up because it may get more clicks. Decide whether this is appropriate for the story.
Caption task	Write one short caption for your selected social media image.

Brief 2 – “Road to Victory” Athlete Profile

Context	You are preparing a profile article about a woman athlete who has qualified for an international competition after years of training. The article covers her discipline, preparation, obstacles, and motivation.
Target audience	Young athletes, families, grassroots clubs, and sport organisations.
Main message	Success is built through discipline, training, resilience, and skill.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include training focus, action, posed portrait, interview/media zone, or podium moment.
Discussion challenge	The athlete has many attractive lifestyle images on social media. Decide whether they support the article's message or shift attention away from performance.
Caption task	Write one short caption that frames the athlete through performance and achievement.



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Brief 3 – Women in Leadership in Sport

Context	A sport federation is launching a campaign to highlight women as leaders in sport. The assigned story focuses on a team captain who leads younger players during matches.
Target audience	Sport clubs, coaches, youth athletes, parents, and federation followers.
Main message	Women athletes are not only performers; they are leaders, decision-makers, and role models.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include leadership, coach-athlete context, team celebration, interview/media zone, or action.
Discussion challenge	Some visuals show the athlete alone, while others show teamwork and communication. Decide which best represents leadership.
Caption task	Write one campaign slogan or post text of maximum 20 words.

Brief 4 – Para-Sport Visibility Campaign

Context	Your organisation is creating a campaign to increase the visibility of women para-athletes. The campaign aims to avoid pity-based storytelling and instead focus on athletic excellence, preparation, speed, competition, and professionalism.
Target audience	Sport organisations, schools, clubs, journalists, and inclusive sport programmes.
Main message	Para-athletes should be portrayed as skilled, powerful, competitive athletes.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include para-athlete action, training, podium moment, interview/media zone, or power in motion.
Discussion challenge	Your team wants an emotional close-up because it feels “inspiring.” Decide whether this reinforces or challenges stereotypes.
Caption task	Write one short caption that avoids pity and focuses on sport performance.



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Brief 5 – Post-Match Report: Victory and Emotion

Context	A women's team has just won an important final. Your outlet is publishing a post-match report that includes the result, key moments, teamwork, and reactions from players.
Target audience	Sports fans, club supporters, sponsors, and local media.
Main message	The victory was earned through teamwork, skill, pressure, and determination.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include team celebration, action shot, podium moment, emotional close-up, or interview/media zone.
Discussion challenge	Emotion is part of sport, but it should not be the only frame used for women athletes. Decide how to balance emotion with performance and sporting context.
Caption task	Write one result announcement for social media.

Brief 6 – Digital Campaign: “Show Her Power, Not Her Pose”

Context	You are launching a campaign that encourages sports media teams to choose better visuals of women athletes. The campaign criticises passive, decorative, body-focused, or decontextualised visual choices and promotes action, dignity, and performance.
Target audience	Journalists, editors, social media managers, clubs, federations, and young content creators.
Main message	Visual choices shape how audiences value women athletes.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include action shot, power in motion, leadership, para-athlete action, or team celebration.
Discussion challenge	You may use one problematic visual as a teaching example, but decide whether it is appropriate for public campaign promotion or only for training discussion.
Caption task	Write one short campaign post that explains the message clearly.



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Brief 7 – Youth Sport Role Model Story

Context	A local sport organisation is publishing a story about women athletes as role models for girls and young women. The article should show that sport develops confidence, teamwork, leadership, discipline, and ambition.
Target audience	Youth athletes, parents, schools, local clubs, and community organisations.
Main message	Girls and young women should see athletes represented as strong, active, skilled, and respected.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include action, training, leadership, team celebration, or podium moment.
Discussion challenge	The team considers using a posed portrait because it looks clean and simple. Decide whether it is strong enough for a role model story or whether a more active image would work better.
Caption task	Write one youth-friendly caption.

Brief 8 – Social Media Performance Challenge

Context	You manage social media for a sports platform. Analytics show that dramatic thumbnails and emotional close-ups receive more clicks, while action shots receive stronger comments from sport-focused followers. You are preparing a post about a women's championship match.
Target audience	Online audiences aged 18–35, casual sport fans, and existing followers.
Main message	The post must attract attention without reducing the athlete to appearance, emotion, or clickbait.
Group task	Select one homepage image, one social media image, and one thumbnail from the Visual Scenario Pack.
Recommended visual direction	Strong options may include action, team celebration, emotional close-up with context, leadership, or power in motion.
Discussion challenge	Balance engagement metrics with fair representation. Decide what minimum standard should guide the final visual choice.
Caption task	Write one short caption that is engaging but not sensationalist.



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Group Presentation Template

Each group should present in 3–4 minutes using the structure below:

- Assigned brief: Which article or campaign did you work on?
- Selected visuals: Homepage image – Visual number ____; Social media image – Visual number ____; Thumbnail – Visual number ____.
- Justification: Why did you choose these three visuals?
- Rejected visuals: Which visuals did you reject and why?
- Caption or post text: Read your caption, headline, or campaign text.
- Internal rule: Suggest one internal rule your organisation could use in the future when choosing visuals of women athletes.

Example internal rule: “Do not use lifestyle or body-focused images unless they are directly relevant to the story.”

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MODULE 5: Governance and accountability

Introduction

This module focuses on the role of media organisations, editorial leadership, and institutional systems in promoting gender equality. It introduces participants to the importance of governance structures, equality policies, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability practices within media environments. The module emphasises that gender equality cannot depend only on individual awareness or personal goodwill, but requires organisational commitment, clear standards, and long-term strategic action. By understanding how institutional cultures and editorial systems shape sports narratives, participants are encouraged to critically reflect on the responsibilities of media organisations in creating inclusive communication practices.

The learning objective of this module is to increase participants' awareness of the role media organisations play in promoting gender equality through policies, monitoring systems, and accountability mechanisms. Participants will explore how governance structures influence sports media representation and will become familiar with practical organisational tools that support fair and balanced communication. The module also aims to encourage critical reflection on institutional responsibility and sustainable approaches to equality within sports journalism and communication.

After completing the module, participants are expected to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support more gender-sensitive and accountable media practices. They will gain understanding of how governance systems and editorial policies influence gender representation in sports media, as well as awareness of the structural barriers that reproduce inequality. Participants will strengthen their ability to identify practical organisational tools such as equality guidelines, monitoring indicators, editorial audits, and accountability systems. In addition, the module aims to promote attitudes of responsibility, critical thinking, collaboration, and commitment towards promoting inclusive and respectful representation of women athletes across sports media environments.

Exercise/Training Method



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Exercise From good intentions to accountability: using POWER tools to build gender-equal editorial practice	
Learning Outcomes	<i>What is the end goal of this exercise? What am I going to teach my learners?</i> By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to understand why gender equality in sports media cannot depend only on individual journalists' awareness, but must be supported by organisational policies, editorial standards, monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms. Participants will learn how to use selected tools from the POWER Strategy and Guidelines to assess gender equality practices within a media organisation, newsroom, sports federation communication department or content team. They will explore how practical tools such as self-assessment checklists, editorial monitoring indicators, story-framing exercises, visual audits and accountability trackers can help identify gaps and transform them into concrete actions. As a final outcome, participants will co-create a short "Mini Editorial Accountability Policy" based on the POWER tools. This policy should include practical commitments, monitoring mechanisms and accountability actions that can realistically be applied in their professional context.
Timeframe	<i>How much time do I need for this exercise? Is the exercise going to be split into phases?</i> Total duration: 60 minutes Suggested structure: 1. Introduction and framing – 10 minutes 2. POWER tools diagnosis: Where is the gap? – 15 minutes 3. Group work: Build a Mini Editorial Accountability Policy – 20 minutes 4. Presentations – 10 minutes 5. Debriefing and evaluation – 5 minutes

Materials

What materials am I going to need for this exercise?

The trainer will need:

- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Printed or digital worksheet: “Mini editorial accountability Policy”
- Printed or projected list of the five POWER gaps
- Printed extracts of selected POWER tools:
 - General Self-Assessment Checklist (p.18 in the English version)
 - Governance & Accountability gap check-list (p.21 of the English version)
- Projector or screen if available

Recommended group size: 12–25 participants.

Recommended group format: small groups of 4–5 people.



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Step-by-step description

What do I need to prepare for this exercise? How do I imagine this exercise playing out? Are there any potential loopholes in my exercise? What is going to happen step by step?

Preparation before the workshop

The trainer prepares one simple case scenario for the participants. For example: “You are part of the editorial or communication team of a sports media outlet or sports federation. Your organisation wants to improve the fair portrayal of women athletes, but currently there is no written gender equality policy, no monitoring of coverage, no internal guidelines, no visual standards and no clear responsibility for checking whether women athletes are represented fairly.”

The trainer also prepares printed or digital versions of the POWER tools. Each group receives printed or digital versions of the POWER tools:

- *General Self-Assessment Checklist (p.18 in the English version)*
- *Governance & Accountability gap check-list (p.21 of the English version)*

The trainer also prepares a worksheet with the following sections:

1. Equality commitment
2. Main gap identified using the POWER tool
3. Editorial or organisational rules
4. Monitoring mechanism
5. Responsible person or team
6. Accountability action
7. First step to implement tomorrow

Phase 1: Introduction and framing – 10 minutes

The trainer briefly introduces the topic of governance and accountability in sports media. The key message should be that gender equality is not only about individual sensitivity or good intentions. It also requires organisational systems.

The trainer explains that the POWER project identified a governance and accountability gap: many media organisations lack formal gender equality policies, monitoring tools and accountability mechanisms. As a result, fair representation often depends on individual journalists rather than on stable institutional practices.



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The trainer introduces the POWER monitoring logic: before organisations can improve, they need to identify where they are now. This is why the POWER Strategy and Guidelines include practical tools that help media professionals assess visibility, framing, visual representation, editorial planning and accountability.

The trainer can introduce the session with the phrase:

“Visibility builds equality, but accountability sustains it.”

Participants are then asked to think individually for one minute about this question:

“What would your organisation need in order to make gender equality in sports media measurable, not just aspirational?”

The trainer collects 3–4 quick answers from the group.

Phase 2: POWER tools diagnosis – Where is the gap? – 15 minutes

Participants are divided into small groups. Each group receives the same case scenario and POWER tools.

The task is to use the POWER tools to identify the main weakness of the fictional organisation.

Each group identifies:

- one main gap;
- one risk if this gap is not addressed;
- one immediate improvement action.

The trainer then asks each group to place one sticky note on a flipchart under one of these headings:

1. Policy gap
2. Monitoring gap
3. Editorial practice gap
4. Visual representation gap
5. Accountability gap

This creates a shared diagnosis of the organisation using POWER tools.

Phase 3: Group work – Build a mini Editorial Accountability Policy – 20 minutes

Each group now uses the results of its POWER tool diagnosis to create a short practical policy that could help the fictional organisation move from good intentions to structured action.

The policy should be short, realistic and directly linked to the tool they used. The trainer should emphasise:



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“This is not a legal document. It is a practical working tool that a newsroom or communication team could start using tomorrow.”

Each group completes the worksheet:

1. Equality commitment
Example: “Our organisation commits to promoting fair, respectful and non-stereotypical representation of women athletes across all sports coverage.”
2. Main gap identified using the POWER tool
Example: “Women’s sports are covered mainly during major events and are not included in the regular editorial calendar.”
3. Three editorial or organisational rules
Examples:
 - We will include women’s competitions in weekly editorial planning.
 - We will focus on performance, skill and expertise, not appearance or private life.
 - We will use dynamic and professional images of women athletes.
 - We will include women athletes, coaches and experts as sources and commentators.
 - We will review headlines and captions before publication using an inclusive language checklist.
4. One monitoring mechanism
Examples:
 - Monthly review of the percentage of women’s sports coverage.
 - Quarterly review of headlines, images and expert sources.
 - Use of the POWER Gender Equality and Editorial Accountability Tracker once per year.
 - Use of the Visual Content Quality Review every six months.
 - Use of a simple dashboard to track women’s and men’s coverage by sport.
5. Responsible person or team
Examples:
 - Editorial coordinator
 - Diversity focal point
 - Communication manager
 - Social media manager



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- Rotating editorial review team
- Equality committee or internal working group

6. One accountability action

Examples:

- Discuss monitoring results in monthly editorial meetings.
- Publish an annual or internal equality progress summary.
- Review problematic content and agree to corrective actions.
- Include gender representation indicators in internal reporting.
- Organise annual staff training based on the POWER Guidelines.

7. First step to implement tomorrow

Examples:

- Add women's sport to the weekly editorial calendar.
- Start counting women's and men's sports stories for one month.
- Use the POWER checklist before publishing the next article or post.
- Assign one person to monitor representation.
- Create a shared folder with good examples of fair portrayal.
- Review the last 10 posts and classify them using the POWER framing or visual checklist.

Potential loophole: groups may create very general or abstract statements.

Trainer response: ask, "Which POWER tool helped you identify this?" and "What exactly would your organisation do next Monday?"

Potential loophole: participants may focus only on content and forget governance.

Trainer response: ask, "Who will be responsible?" "How will this be monitored?" and "How will progress be reported?"

Potential loophole: participants may say they do not have decision-making power.

Trainer response: invite them to identify one realistic action within their role, such as proposing a checklist, raising the topic in an editorial meeting, or starting a small monitoring exercise.

Phase 4: Presentations – 10 minutes

Each group has 2 minutes to present its Mini Editorial Accountability Policy.



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Each group should present only:

1. The main gap they identified
2. Their monitoring mechanism
3. Their accountability action

After each presentation, the trainer briefly highlights one strong point and connects it to the POWER approach: practical tools, institutional responsibility, monitoring and measurable progress.

The trainer may ask one quick question after each presentation:
“How would this action help the organisation move from individual goodwill to institutional accountability?”



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Debriefing and evaluation

***How can I evaluate that the learning objectives have been reached?
What kind of questions can I ask my participants?***

The debriefing should help participants connect the exercise with their real professional environments.

Suggested debriefing questions:

1. Which POWER tool was most useful for identifying the organisation's weakness? Why?
2. What was easier to define: editorial rules, monitoring tools, or accountability actions?
3. What is the difference between having good intentions and having an accountability system?
4. What could happen if an organisation has guidelines but no monitoring mechanism?
5. What could happen if an organisation monitors gender equality but does not discuss the results or act on them?
6. Who should be responsible for gender equality in a media organisation: journalists, editors, managers, communication teams, or everyone?
7. Which POWER tool could you realistically use in your own professional context?
8. What resistance might appear when introducing these tools, and how could it be addressed?
9. What is one concrete action you personally could take after this training?

Evaluation method:

At the end, each participant completes a short "exit ticket" with three sentences:

- One thing I understood better today is...
- One POWER tool I could use in my work is...
- One accountability action my organisation should take is...

This allows the trainer to assess whether the learning objectives have been reached.



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**Recommendations
(if any)**

1. Keep the workshop **practical** and avoid turning it into a theoretical lecture. The aim is not for participants to design a perfect institutional policy, but to understand how POWER tools can help organisations move from awareness to measurable action.
2. Use **the POWER checklists** as active working materials, not only as handouts. Participants should apply them to a case, identify gaps and transform them into concrete commitments.
3. Encourage participants **to think from their real professional roles**. Some participants may be journalists, others communication managers, students, content creators or federation staff. Invite them to adapt the tools to their own context.
4. Use **clear and simple language**. Terms such as “governance” and “accountability” may sound abstract, so always connect them to real actions: who decides, who monitors, who reports, who corrects and how progress is measured.
5. Remind participants that accountability is not about blaming individuals. It is about **creating systems that help organisations improve**, learn and become more consistent in their commitment to gender equality.
6. If time allows, the trainer can close the session by inviting participants **to take a photo of their group policy** and consider using it as the basis for an internal discussion in their own newsroom, federation, organisation or communication team.
7. For a longer version of this workshop, the trainer can ask participants **to apply the POWER tools to real examples of media content**, such as recent headlines, social media posts, photos or match reports. This would allow the group to test the tools in a more realistic setting and develop practical recommendations for improvement.

NAME OF THE CASE STUDY SESSION

“Not just one article”: Building Accountability in a Sports Newsroom



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Learning Outcomes	<i>What should participants learn or be able to do after this exercise?</i> After completing this case study exercise, participants should be able to understand how editorial decisions, newsroom routines, and organisational policies influence the representation of women athletes in sports media. They will learn to identify when gender inequality is not only a content problem, but also a governance and accountability issue within a media organisation. Participants will be able to analyse a realistic newsroom situation and identify gaps related to editorial planning, gender-sensitive guidelines, monitoring, visual representation, leadership responsibility, and transparency. They will also practise applying practical tools inspired by the POWER Guidelines, such as self-assessment checklists, visual content review, story-framing analysis, and editorial accountability tracking. By the end of the exercise, participants should be able to propose concrete organisational measures that could help a newsroom move from individual goodwill to systematic gender-equal media practice.
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Case Study Summary

What is the case about? What is the main issue or challenge?

The case focuses on a fictional but realistic sports media outlet called SportDaily. SportDaily is a popular online sports platform with a strong audience and active social media channels. The outlet publicly supports gender equality and occasionally publishes stories about women athletes, especially during major competitions. However, its daily coverage remains strongly dominated by men's football, while women's sport is rarely included in regular editorial planning.

The main issue appears when SportDaily publishes an article about a national women's basketball team that has qualified for a European championship. Although the achievement is significant, the article is short, placed low on the homepage, and illustrated with a passive team photo from a press conference. The headline reads: "The Girls bring joy before the big tournament." By contrast, on the same day, several men's football transfer stories are published with strong performance-based headlines, tactical analysis, and dynamic images.

After criticism on social media, the editor-in-chief asks the newsroom to "be more careful next time." However, the outlet has no written gender equality policy, no internal editorial checklist, no system for monitoring gender balance in coverage, and no clear person responsible for reviewing representation issues. Some journalists argue that they support women's sport, but they do not have enough time, data, or editorial space. Others say that "audience demand is low" and that the platform simply follows clicks.

The challenge for participants is to analyse the case not only as a problematic article, but as a sign of deeper organisational gaps. Participants must identify what went wrong, which governance and accountability mechanisms are missing, and what practical steps SportDaily could introduce to improve fair representation of women athletes in a sustainable way.



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Timeframe	<i>How much time is needed? Will it be divided into phases?</i> Total duration: 60 minutes Suggested phases: 1. Introduction and individual reading – 10 minutes 2. Group analysis using POWER-inspired tools – 20 minutes 3. Development of newsroom accountability recommendations – 15 minutes 4. Group presentations – 10 minutes 5. Debriefing and evaluation – 5 minutes
Materials	<i>What materials are required (case text, flipchart, etc.)?</i> The trainer will need: ● Printed or digital version of the case study text ● Flipchart or whiteboard ● Markers ● Sticky notes ● Printed worksheet: “SportDaily accountability analysis” ● Printed or projected POWER-inspired tools: ○ <i>General Self-Assessment Checklist (p.18 in the English version)</i> ○ <i>Governance & Accountability gap check-list (p.21 of the English version)</i> ● Optional: printed examples of alternative headlines and images ● Optional: laptop or projector for group presentation Recommended group size: 12–25 participants. Recommended group format: small groups of 4–5 people.



Phase 3: Development of newsroom accountability recommendations – 15 minutes

Each group develops three practical recommendations for SportDaily.

The recommendations must include:

1. One editorial recommendation
Example: Replace infantilising headlines with performance-based framing.
2. One monitoring recommendation
Example: Track the gender ratio of sports coverage every month.
3. One accountability recommendation
Example: Assign a diversity focal point or editorial review team responsible for checking representation standards.

Groups should be encouraged to be realistic. The trainer should remind them that a good recommendation must answer:

- Who will do it?
- When will it happen?
- How will it be measured?
- How will the organisation know if progress has been made?

Example recommendation:

“SportDaily should introduce a monthly gender balance review of homepage sports stories. The digital editor will track the number, placement, and type of stories about women and men athletes. Results will be discussed in the first editorial meeting of each month, and one improvement target will be agreed for the following month.”

Phase 4: Group presentations – 10 minutes

Each group has two minutes to present its findings.

Each presentation should include:

1. The main problem identified
2. The POWER-inspired tool used
3. One immediate editorial fix
4. One long-term accountability mechanism

The trainer writes the accountability mechanisms on the flipchart and groups them under three headings:

- Policy
- Monitoring
- Responsibility

At the end of the presentations, the trainer highlights that fair representation requires all three dimensions working together.



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Guiding Questions

What key questions will support the analysis of the case?

The trainer leads a short reflection discussion connecting the case to participants' real professional contexts.

The aim is to help participants understand that isolated corrections are not enough. Sustainable change requires organisational systems.

The trainer can use the following questions to support group analysis:

Understanding the problem

1. What is the main issue in the SportDaily case?
2. Is the problem only the headline, or is it part of a wider editorial pattern?
3. How does the headline "The girls bring joy before the big tournament" frame the athletes?
4. What message does the homepage placement send about the value of women's sport?
5. How does the image choice affect public perception of the athletes?

Analysing governance and accountability

6. What internal rules or guidelines seem to be missing?
7. Who appears to be responsible for gender equality in the newsroom?
8. Is there any evidence that SportDaily monitors gender balance in its coverage?
9. What happens when there is no clear accountability mechanism?
10. How could the newsroom avoid repeating the same mistake?

Applying practical tools

11. Which POWER-inspired checklist would help identify this problem?
12. What indicators could SportDaily start tracking?
13. How could the outlet review its headlines, images, and homepage placement?
14. What kind of internal training would be useful?
15. How could SportDaily make progress visible internally or externally?

Connecting to real practice

16. Have you seen similar cases in real sports media?
17. What would be easy to change immediately?
18. What would require leadership support?
19. What resistance might appear inside the newsroom?



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	20. How could journalists and editors respond to the argument that “women’s sport does not get clicks”?
Debriefing and evaluation	<i>What questions will help participants reflect and connect to real-life situations?</i> <i>How will you check if learning outcomes were achieved?</i> The debriefing should help participants move from case analysis to professional reflection. Suggested debriefing questions: 1. What was the most obvious problem in the case? 2. What was the less visible organisational problem behind it? 3. Why is it not enough to simply tell journalists to “be more careful”? 4. How can monitoring help a newsroom understand its own representation patterns? 5. How can accountability protect both athletes and media credibility? 6. What is the difference between an individual journalist trying to do better and a newsroom having a gender equality system? 7. Which recommendation from your group could realistically be introduced in a real newsroom? 8. What is one action that could be implemented tomorrow? 9. What is one action that would need management support? 10. How can sports journalists contribute to institutional change, even if they are not managers? Evaluation method: At the end, participants complete a short exit ticket: • One governance problem I can now identify is... • One POWER-inspired tool I would use is... • One accountability mechanism I would recommend is... The trainer can check if learning outcomes were achieved by reviewing whether participants were able to: • identify both content-level and organisational-level problems; • connect the case to governance and accountability; • propose practical monitoring tools; • suggest clear responsibilities; • formulate realistic accountability actions.

Recommendations (if any)	The trainer should encourage participants to think as professionals inside a real media organisation. The goal is not to criticise one journalist, but to understand how editorial systems can create repeated patterns of inequality. It is important to avoid turning the discussion into a general debate about whether women's sport "sells" or not. If this argument appears, the trainer can redirect the group by asking: "What evidence does the newsroom have?" and "Has the outlet provided consistent, high-quality coverage long enough to build an audience?" The trainer should also remind participants that accountability is not about punishment. It is about creating a professional system that supports better journalism, protects media credibility, and ensures fairer representation. If more time is available, the trainer can add a practical rewriting task. Participants can rewrite the headline, suggest a better image brief, and redesign the homepage placement for the women's basketball story. This can help connect governance discussions with concrete editorial practice. For advanced groups, the trainer can ask participants to create a one-month action plan for SportDaily, including indicators, responsibilities, and deadlines.
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