

MORE THAN ONE BIB

A MEDIA VISIBILITY TOOLKIT FOR MOTHERS IN SPORT

***SUPPORTING SPORT ORGANISATIONS,
MEDIA, AND SPONSORS TO BETTER
REPRESENT AND INCLUDE MOTHERS IN SPORT***



***“MOTHERHOOD IS NOT THE END OF A SPORTING CAREER,
IT IS PART OF THE JOURNEY.”***



THE CURRENT STATE

Despite growing attention to women's sport, mothers remain underrepresented in sport media and storytelling.



While many women continue to participate and perform during pregnancy and motherhood, these experiences are rarely reflected in coverage or communications.



When they are included, stories are often framed as exceptional "comebacks," rather than recognising motherhood as a normal stage of an athlete's journey.

THE VISIBILITY GAP

Research from this project highlights a clear disconnect between participation and representation.

Survey responses from mothers participating in sport showed that:



88% of mothers returned to sport after childbirth



88% reported that mothers are rarely represented in mainstream sport media

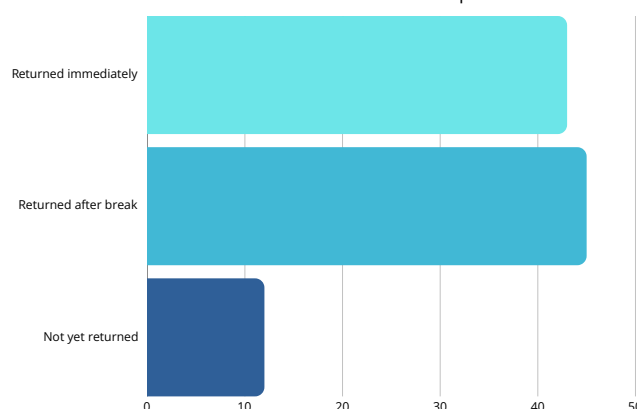


66% reported mothers are rarely featured in club communications



82% reported mothers are rarely represented on social media

Mothers Return to Sport





WHY REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Media and sport organisations play an important role in shaping how motherhood in sport is represented.

Representation shapes how motherhood in sport is understood.

When mothers are visible in sport storytelling, it reinforces that participation across different life stages is both normal and supported. It also challenges outdated narratives that position motherhood as a barrier to performance.

Authentic and consistent representation helps shift perceptions, supports athlete retention, and creates more inclusive sporting environments.

Authentic storytelling helps create a more accurate and inclusive representation of mothers in sport.



- ✓ Highlight athletic performance alongside motherhood
- ✓ Share everyday stories of training, competition, and parenting
- ✓ Include realistic journeys of postpartum recovery and return to sport
- ✓ Showcase diverse experiences of mothers across different sports and levels



- ✗ Framing motherhood only as a “comeback story”
- ✗ Treating motherhood as an obstacle to athletic success
- ✗ Ignoring mothers in sport coverage and storytelling
- ✗ Reinforcing the idea that athletes must choose between family and sport

STORY IDEAS FOR MEDIA AND ORGANISATIONS

Sport organisations and media platforms play a key role in shaping how motherhood in sport is understood.

These story ideas help move beyond one off, exceptional narratives and instead show motherhood as a normal part of an athlete's journey.



These stories help show that motherhood and sport participation are not exceptions. They are part of the sporting landscape.

Athlete Stories

- A day in the life of an athlete mother
- Training and competing while balancing parenting
- Returning to sport after pregnancy

Event Coverage

- Highlight mothers competing in events
- Show family friendly environments at competitions
- Capture behind the scenes moments of sport and parenting

Human Stories

- Support systems that enable mothers to stay in sport
- Realities of postpartum recovery and training
- Athletes continuing their careers after becoming mothers



MOTHER FRIENDLY SPORT CHECKLIST

Sport organisations, clubs, and media platforms can use this checklist to assess how well they support and represent mothers in sport.

Visibility and Representation



- Feature mothers in athlete profiles and storytelling
- Highlight mothers in event coverage and communications
- Share stories of athletes balancing sport and parenting
- Include mothers in promotional campaigns and marketing

Media and Communication



- Avoid framing motherhood as exceptional or unusual
- Focus on athletic performance as well as motherhood
- Share authentic stories of training, recovery, and parenting
- Promote diverse experiences of motherhood in sport

Organisational Support



- Offer flexible training schedules where possible
- Provide child friendly environments at clubs or events
- Provide lactation or breastfeeding spaces at sporting venues
- Support athletes returning to sport after pregnancy

Community and Culture



- Encourage open conversations about motherhood in sport
- Promote positive role models of athlete mothers
- Recognise motherhood as a normal stage of an athlete's life



MOVING FORWARD

Improving the visibility of mothers in sport requires both cultural and structural change.

Sport organisations, media platforms, and sponsors all play a role in shaping how motherhood in sport is represented.



TAKE ACTION

Start with small, intentional changes:

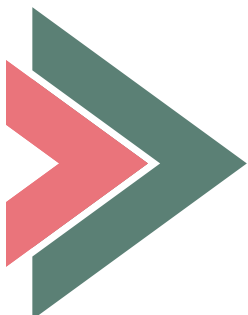
- Include mothers in athlete profiles and communications
- Apply the storytelling guidelines in this toolkit
- Use the Mother Friendly Sport Checklist to assess current practices
- Share and amplify stories of athlete mothers across platforms



WHY THIS MATTERS

When mothers are visible in sport media and communications, it reinforces a powerful message.

Motherhood and sport participation are not mutually exclusive.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Increasing visibility is not just about representation. It is about shaping what is seen as possible.

By making mothers more visible in sport, we support:

- Continued participation
- More inclusive environments
- A stronger and more representative sporting culture
- Role modelling for the next generation