

MM: Perfect, so hopefully it's come up on your screen now that you are being recorded somewhere?

LJ: Probably somewhere I think maybe there's a bit less on the phone screen then. OH yeah, I see the record. Yeah, we're winning.

MM: Thanks, Lisa, thank you for taking the time to join us on a Tuesday morning. So, if I can just get you to give us a little bit of an insight as to who you are, your experiences in sport, and the role that is that you currently undertake please.

LJ: Sure, my name is Lisa Jacobs, so I'm kind of former international hockey player and for about 10 years with the Irish women's team and I also had a chance to play kind of semiprofessionally in Holland and I also did about a year and a half in the Women's the Irish women's rugby Sevens program so that's kind of the athlete life, and probably just as a background. When I was in college I was studying in psychology, and then I went on to do a diploma in executive coaching. So, sort of coaching in a suppose more business setting an. And I suppose my love of sport and the coaching at all kind of connected together because I was doing some hockey coaching and skills purely just for the money. No, no joke in college. Not really there's no but I think a lot of it fit together for me. When I suppose my area of interest in terms of study an and psychology was the first time, I think I realized. Okay, this is how I can connect. Everything I know when I care about to the world. And so, while I was I've kind of been coaching really a lot with the junior age groups for maybe three or four years and just senior club stuff. And actually, literally since I spoke to you last, I know I'm just kind of doing 10 contracted days coaching with the senior women's team now, so we'll see how that goes. So yeah, that's my background.

1:50 MM: Thank you and do you have any formal coaching qualifications or is it all through from your playing experience to transition into coaching?

LJ: Yeah, so I've kind of been doing the levels as I go, so um. Can you still hear me?

MM: Sorry, completely lost you there. I asked the question and then I lost. You are back!

LJ: You're grand, I think. And so, yes, I've kind of been doing. It was more so kind of when I was finishing playing. I started doing like I did, kind of level one just as i was playing, but not very deliberately. It was just offered as a. You know, you should do this as an athlete, but probably when I kind of started engaging it in it in myself. Yeah, I've been sort of working away at an what's available here in Ireland and then I'll be able to access some kind of European courses now, so. Yeah, I think it's good like my experience coach education is sometimes it's, it's not absolutely brilliant for everything you want, but there's always people to learn from things to learn and it's really worth having on your CV as well. You know, so yeah.

3:10 MM: Yeah. Perfect. Yeah, thank you and then final question. Ready to set a little bit of the background and you mentioned your studying area psychology and bringing those two worlds together almost. But what would you say is your biggest motivation to get involved at immerse yourself in hockey coaching?

LJ: And I think I just I really love people's potential like whatever context is in supposed to see anyone, even if it's your friend that you chatting up my God, you could really do that and they don't see it themselves, but it's just, I suppose, what role you can play in that journey for people to reach their own potential and I suppose from having been in team environments, it just makes it so much more complex than an individual performance so. So, I yeah, I suppose I just love being empowered to that and trying to help the group perform a yeah. So, I suppose they just really enjoyed themselves and realize what are capable of and hopefully that translates to other areas of their life as well.

MM: Yeah, perfect which then leads us almost seamlessly into that the second are of the question, which is around your coaching philosophy, your coaching values, your coaching approaches. So how would you sum up your coaching philosophy for whatever better word?

4:28 LJ: This is always such a hard one to put in words, I really just do think it's it can be as simple as to get the best out of everyone and I suppose then when you bring a team into it. It's more complex and sometimes you have to drop that little piece about getting the absolute best out of a person to prioritise the team at different periods and it's a fine balance, I think. An, but yes, I suppose that it's kind of looking at everything and going what? What more can we get out of that? Or, you know, sometimes it's actually really obvious. It's not like it's not the fine margins the 8020 locals. Jeez, we just this this is going to make the biggest difference for us right now so but yeah, get getting the best out of people. I think it would be the kind of foundation of it.

MM: And where do you think that's come from? Is it? You're playing experiences? Is your studies psychology? Where do you think the foundations of your must have come from?

5:24 LJ: Um... I probably from two places and I suppose I've been coached by probably like more than 100 coaches at this stage in my life and at different times in my life. Different coaches probably had a really huge impact on me, sort of beyond just my performance on the pitch, but I suppose it's quite hard to like. Extricate them as well. You know that a certainly when you're at high level, it kind of like anything that's going on in your life sort of impact your performance whether you try to not let it or what, but I do think and it's probably like some of the coaches have had the biggest impact on me have really. Like Foster the like, I really do have a curiosity around my own potential. An and I suppose when you're playing, that's the forum that we're kind of looking at it in, but and I suppose now translates to, you know, as a coach or whatever but. You know, I'm curious about my own potential, and I know that part of me reaching my own potential is actually sort of looking at that and other people and trying to bring it to life and full fruition, I suppose.

MM: Perfect, perfect. So, if I was if I was over in Ireland right now and I was coming to watch the session that you were about to deliver. What might that look like? What does your coaching philosophy approaching approaches what they actually look like in practice?

LJ: Yeah, so I suppose I it probably depends whether your kind of leader, assistant or whatever. I probably am quite strong on the kind of culture, piece and what we're what we're looking for from everybody. So, kind of like simple enough, but just really reaffirming you know whatever the group has decided like. From there. And like a really high work ethic or

um. You know they were combative or whatever it is a reaffirming that, but I think like as much kind of individual feedback as I can, you know, and that conversation would be short, but very much like. Yeah, Shelley, you're so good at this and we need to see this in your game. Or you know, this is where you're making an impact. Now the next pieces for you, like the kind of stretch element, or now we want you to work on that. So, it's..For me, I suppose it's really important to acknowledge what people are good at as a foundation now don't get me wrong, I can also be very tough. And I think that's required. I think sometimes that clarity of, like you know, this is not good enough. It kind of removes all the you know pardon the French. All the **** of the stories that people tell themselves. And I mean, if you're coaching a kid, it's not really like that, but by and large and coaching adults who are quite self-motivated to perform so. And it's really like this is what we need to see and hear what I'm seeing from you. So, trying to be objective and just feedback. Here's what I'm noticing. In a way that supports either, you know, kind of. This is the reality of the situation as opposed to just my opinion, but really, yeah, I suppose always that there is kind of a human that level of like human engagement. So, whatever the feedback is, whether it's tough for its support of our encouraging or just even just a detail to say, try this or. Is I would hope that all the players know that I'm coming from a place of I'm really just trying to make you better and I suppose I'm probably not afraid to be tough sometimes too, because I know it doesn't kill anyone and actually sometimes by somebody expecting more of you than you do yourself. You go to a place that you never could have imagined yourself. So, suppose yeah, a lot of [inaudible] personal experiences feeding into to how I'd [inaudible] but..... I would hope I'm always an approachable, you know, so that anything that you give is something that might land. Whenever, maybe not in the moment, but on reflection.

9:25 MM: Yeah, absolutely. And same been talking with students about, you know, pushing them out of that comfort zone and that into potentially a panic zone or a zone of what they can't do on their own yet and actually enabling them to potentially fail. But also, realise that they can do more than they sometimes give themselves credit for and our role as coaches in that process. Yeah.

LJ: Definitely.

MM: Which brings us onto then the question which is around player learning, player development and I appreciate you say the place you're working with aren't beginners. They aren't grassroot; they are skilled and experienced players. So, what do you think is essential for them to still be able to learn and develop?

LJ: Yeah, definitely like an openness to learning. You know if you come across somebody thinks they know no at all. You know it's there's no room to coach them, really. And then yeah, I suppose that it probably with the players I work with very much comes from within an, and sometimes you know if you're seeing something that looks like a lack of motivation, or you know, afraid of trying something outside their comfort. Whatever. I suppose that's where you come in. But yeah, I suppose the biggest thing is like a desire to learn first of all, and kind of an openness to it. And I suppose then to go on another level, like I would really try to foster that i suppose like almost a desire to. To try something that you never have or to like go to failure like **** it up, who cares you know. And the more you do that then you will speed up your hands or your you know and then you'll get it spot. Part of being able to learn is actually accepting that you're going to get it wrong. Many times, before you get some part of it, writes, and yes, I suppose there's probably actually vulnerability in that too. And

you know is to be prepared to be worse to be better or to look stupid to actually when it comes to performing, being able to execute something that was. Somebody else can't.

MM: Yeah, and what do you think the role of the coaching being in that process? So, whether it's from when you've been as a player and other coaches or now in your transition to a coach, what do you think the coaches role and responsibility is in athlete learning?

11:55 LJ: I think first of all is creating the environment, so creating either an exercise or culture or whatever where and people have space to fail. They have the right amount of pressure. Like sometimes it's minimal so they can just build the skill at a lower level, and sometimes it's trying to be match specific or more pressure than normal. And that can be by putting in defenders. Or can be you know like for me as a coach. You know, sometimes you hear people going up up, up. You know all this, like noise and whatever an for me. It's kind of finding the balance of an whatever it is you need in the environment to create. That stretch or sometimes it's stretch, and sometimes it's you know like just to give you an example of some of the girls I'm working with now actually. I actually need to slow down a bit, you know. So, stop trying to do it at 100 miles an hour like cause It's not working. Just don't be afraid to go backwards a little bit to get the repetition. So number one creating the environment and I also think like it's a fine balance, but like a safety to be wrong to fail to mess up, but equally like an equal measure in a desire to succeed an and just that it's acknowledge it doesn't have to be a big thing. But like you know, acknowledge the effort acknowledge the vulnerability. acknowledge that you're getting closer, that we're making progress. And so I suppose. The environment feedback. Safety pressure probably kind of a balance of all of them, but also understanding individuals learn differently. You know, like how do I describe the exercise, do I, you know, do I do a demo and get people to walkthrough it Or do I draw it on the boards? Do I explain it? Do I you know? So, being alive to the people you have? How do they? How do they learn best and how do they respond best so I don't treat everybody the same way. Just kind of being alive to that I suppose. And yeah, I never thought about that before, but. It's okay.

14:11 MM: I'm just gonna pick up on one of the words that you said there and you said about sometimes Don't be afraid to slow it down and take it back and work through the repetition. How much of...how much do you use repetition and running through the potential scenarios and skills and techniques within the sessions and how much do you let the game or modified game conditions be the teacher?

LJ: A bit of both, so I would really be an I suppose this. This is really the thing that I notice has evolved as I've kind of evolved as a coach. And it's probably taken me until this season, so it's my club coaching at the moment. Actually, I'm coaching with the guy who he is an international player and it's kind of one of his first experiences as coaching. So he's head coach. But he's also playing an I'm assisting with him, but it's only through that process that I'm realising actually. Like, not that I feel like I'm rigid, but I do have. Some kind of clear principles so that you give the individuals or the units, or the teams some clarity around what you're trying to do without being really rigid and saying in this situation you do that like still that they have the kind of autonomy to decide. Knowing the end points are trying to get to or this sort of a few different things that were trying to kind of fail as we go along. And I probably plays back to the last question like I do feel as a coach. It's your role to. You know to give maybe like a little bit of a road map, but not, you know you get up to the top of the mountain however you like, you know, so you can. You can use whatever you have in your in

your bag to do that. And yeah, sorry, I totally went off question there probably. But I do think so. Definitely, I think more kind of advanced coaches will learn how to condition a game to instead of having to give them three or four coaching points, you actually put them in a situation where they get to coaching point 4 and they have to figure it, figure it out. But I also do believe probably in the session you would see a balance of repeating the core skill. That I think, is required to succeed an. You know, maybe not deliberately saying we're doing this, and then I expect to see the game. It's not really like that. It's like it's suppose it's kind of giving them a key tool to go and get to talk about maintenance thing, But an. Like sport is so dynamic there so many ways to do things and I think given the players also freedom, means that you'll get the best out of them too. So yeah, kind of a mix.

16:49 MM: You know that the little brief discussion that we had off camera was trying to kinda understand that that in different sports that that trade off for that continuum of skill based, technique based practice and game based practice. It will change and I guess depending on who you're working with and what you're working on and where you're trying to get with it will influence the, Yeah kind of percentage split of in game. And potential isolated practice, as it were.

LJ: Yeah, yeah, I do think on that repetition like I find it actually quite over the last couple years. There's quite a difference in the groups and coaching like the level of focus on exercises where you're repeating like people really struggle to go past like 40 seconds or two minutes or whatever. And actually, like building that up. And as a coach like calling them back to narrow their focus and. Also explaining like the really good players just get stuck into repeating, you know, when it's not about when is this exercise done or when am I moving on. It's like how can I had good kind of get in every Rep like it is at like a 10. How many am I consistently doing? You know? So just trying to build a bit of a mind setting them too well while repeating.

MM: And then final kind of question around this area is how do you use the learners in the learning of both themselves and the other athletes that other players in the sessions do you? Do you draw upon the learners themselves or the players or participants themselves in that process?

18:23 LJ: Yeah, I suppose like in my sport hockey like there's, there's loads of elements to it, but at the end of the day, the athlete has to make so many decisions in a game. So I think supporting them to develop their decision making is not just in an exercise, it's calling the group in and say what did you think? Because I think often where I see people struggling as they are looking for the coach for the feedback to tell them. How do I think I'm doing its to kind of build and reaffirm that they have the capacity to measure themselves an and to also rely on that too when the coach has a squad of 28 to deal with and there is probably not going to get to you like or possibly not for like a month, you know, because I suppose like confidence can be such a huge part of it as well. But also, like I suppose I'd be much more. My style will be like. You know, I think it's very easy to give people the answers, but it's for me it's really important to say you know what options do you see here or what options do you need? Or you know what we're trying to do, what would you do the next time? So a lot of questions to try and draw. I suppose it comes back to my core belief in peoples potential. That you know I'm going to really search to see if you have that expertise and show you that you have it and then you can go away and you have another tool in your bag. And if I know that you don't, then you know. Obviously, trying to fill in the blanks like you know here are the options were looking for or. This is what I saw or. Or maybe using video. And to kind of,

I suppose, help them see it when they're not under pressure, and then hopefully they can bring that into the game, but. As much as possible for me it's important to get the athlete to tap into their own expertise and also then, like very simply, if you are working with a group of five or six and like in a small little session. And is to stop them afterward and say, do you see what Sarah just did there or like? What do you notice about her so that they have that real visual of like this is a good technique? Or here's what we're looking for because I think people can very easily then kind of go. Yeah, grand. They don't need all the five coaching points, they just have the picture and they can go and do it. So hopefully that answers.

20:49 MM: Absolutely and then brings me on to my final question for you really is what would you say is the biggest lesson that you have learnt within your coaching to date?

LJ: Erm Gosh, there are so many. Probably after every session you know we kind of think you know if I did that again or I should have been more clear at the start or whatever. But I suppose the biggest piece is the I really do think, and this is probably like a kind of a cycle of me having played and also coaching and seeing like now how rich in data we are in kind of scientific ways. But if you look at say international teams or like a performance teams across the world. You know there are pretty much similar enough physically. You know you can. You kind of need to get into that like top range to just compete. It doesn't really give you an advantage if you're not at that level then you're at a disadvantage, but. For me, the gain is in that human space. It's like you know, yes, understand the team tactics in your role in it. Improve your technique. All this kind of thing. But the difference for me then is. How do I? How do I reach you at a human level? How do I help you find that level that gets you to your absolute best? You know? And then obviously doing it more than once so. For me is the power of. Sometimes the coaching is nothing to do with the hockey. You know it's. It's. Noticing something before the training session or having the chat when somebody's having a **** day or whatever. For me, the power of coaching is actually in those moments and. And. Sometimes they can make the biggest difference you know so. Um? Is maybe, I suppose, the message like don't get lost in the detail of the sport and for me it's like person first and sport second I suppose so. Um? Yeah, biggest lesson.

MM: Lisa, thank you so much.