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The power list – accelerating the advancement of women in sports leadership

A Sponsorship Program developed by The Male Champions of Change for Sport is working to accelerate the advancement of 60+ high-potential women in the sector.

Established in 2016, the program has just been extended to encompass 119 people including the sponsees, and their sponsors – a list of CEOs, Chairs, Directors and Executives that reads like a who's-who of sports management in Australia.

The program has already been successful in opening minds – and doors – to increase career pathways for women in sport.

Renee Narcis runs events and junior competition for Basketball Australia as the Australian Junior Championships Manager. In April 2016, she was matched with Tom Larner, Director of Events and Facilities at Tennis Australia as part of the 2016 MCC Women in Sport Sponsorship program.

Tom is responsible for all major Tennis Australia events including the Australian Open and is also overseeing the redevelopment of the Olympic Park Precinct in Melbourne.

Renee spent two days shadowing Tom during the 2017 Australian Open, which included exposure to everything from high-level security briefings, player management strategies, and operational briefings.

Tom also hosted Renee at the Newcombe Medal Awards and organised for her to go behind the scenes at the Hopman Cup in Perth while she was there on holidays.

According to Renee: “Tennis Australia is recognised as a world-leader in sports events management. With Tom’s help I have learned so much from their absolute professionalism, marketing expertise and player and fan engagement strategies. It’s knowledge that I have applied directly to my role at Basketball Australia.

“It’s also opened my eyes to the range of roles available in the sector and local and international career pathways for me, which are more extensive than I thought.”

Renee says her tips for a great sponsor / sponsee relationship are inspired by the enthusiasm and genuine interest Tom has shown in her career development.

“Take the time to get to know each other. Learn about each other’s career pathways. Don’t be afraid to ask questions so it’s clear what you want to get out of the arrangement.

And for sponsors, Renee says Tom’s approach is an excellent model:

“Be proactive. Get involved. Show genuine interest. Provide experiences and opportunities that might otherwise be unattainable. Make connections.”

From the sponsor’s perspective, Tom says: “The Program has been a rewarding experience for both of us. Renee has grasped the opportunity, shown a real desire to learn and to apply what she has learnt in her role at Basketball Australia. It’s been a privilege to expose Renee to what we do, broaden her networks, and provide opportunities which really make a difference.”

The 2017-2018 Male Champions of Change Women in Sport Sponsorship program will be officially launched at a forum hosted by NRL CEO Todd Greenberg and MCC Sport Convenor Elizabeth Broderick in Sydney on Wednesday 2 August.

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