



You do not need to become a menstrual cycle expert to coach girls well. You do need enough understanding to notice when a player may need support, have a normal conversation about it, and know when to signpost for more help.

Your job is not to diagnose.

Notice. Listen. Adapt when appropriate. Signpost when something needs more support.

What coaches should know

- Periods are part of player health, not something players should have to hide or push through in silence.
- Symptoms vary. One player may have cramps, fatigue or headaches. Another may notice very little.
- Cycle phases can provide useful context, but they do not reliably predict an individual player's performance or injury risk.
- Puberty is highly individual. Players of the same age may be at very different stages of physical development.
- Persistent or severe symptoms deserve support, not tougher coaching.

Useful language

Instead of	Try
"Is it your period?"	"You do not seem quite yourself today. Are you okay?"
"It is just hormones."	"Is there anything affecting how you are feeling or training today?"
"Push through it."	"Is this manageable, or is something stopping you from training normally?"
"Everyone gets cramps."	"Do you need anything to make training easier today?"

Common situations

Player says or shows	A useful coaching response
Mild cramps	Ask how she feels. Offer a short break, longer warm up or lighter option if she wants one.
Worried about a leak	Give discreet toilet access, products and spare kit if available.
Very tired or dizzy	Pause activity and check wellbeing. Do not assume it is just hormones. Follow club medical procedures.
Repeated symptoms	Encourage appropriate parent, carer or healthcare support.
Periods stop unexpectedly	Encourage medical review. Do not praise this as a sign of hard training.

Cycle tracking in a team setting

Player self tracking can be useful. Team wide collection of menstrual data needs much more thought.

- Sharing should be voluntary. Players should not feel pressured to disclose menstrual information.
- Do not use estimated cycle phase to decide selection, playing time or whether a player is safe to train.

- If a club collects health data, be clear about why it is needed, who can see it, how it will be stored, and how safeguarding and data protection requirements will be met.
- In grassroots football, a simple wellbeing conversation is often more useful than collecting cycle day information.

Performance and injury

Hormones are an important area of female sports science. They may influence tissues and how some players feel. What we cannot currently do is predict an individual player's injury risk from cycle day alone.

Put your energy into the things we know are worth doing:

- Structured dynamic warm ups and neuromuscular preparation.
- Regular strength work appropriate to age and ability.
- Good jumping, landing, deceleration and change of direction technique.
- Sensible training loads, recovery, sleep, hydration and enough food.
- Early reporting of pain, injury or persistent symptoms.

When to signpost for more support

- Severe or worsening period pain that affects normal activities.
- Very heavy bleeding.
- Repeated dizziness, fainting or feeling very unwell.
- Persistent unusual fatigue or breathlessness.
- Periods stopping unexpectedly.
- Symptoms repeatedly affecting school, sleep, training or matches.

The science is still catching up

Female physiology matters, but the answer is not to replace old male centred assumptions with a new one size fits all cycle chart. Understand the physiology, track individual patterns, and coach the player in front of you.

Sources and further reading

- England Football Female Health Hub, menstrual health, cycle tracking and injury resilience resources.
- UEFA Consensus Statement on Menstrual Cycle Tracking in Women's Football, 2025.
- NHS guidance on period pain and period problems.
- FIFA 11+ and related football injury prevention research.
- Stacy Sims, Next Gen and The Evolution of Menstrual Cycle Training.