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## Summary of the Webinar: Alpine Ontario - Women in Coaching - Jan 27

### Navigating Growth: From Coaching U16 to World Cup - The Journey of Self-Discovery and Skill Development *with Mary Beth Hemphill & Katie Twible*

#### Overview:

This webinar provided a platform for sharing experiences, opportunities, and insights in ski coaching, with an emphasis on the advancement of women in the field. Katie Twible and Mary Beth Hemphill discussed personal journeys, challenges, and the importance of building networks and mentorship in coaching.

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## Key Takeaways

### 1. Importance of Community and Support Systems

- **Women in Coaching Program:** A source of connection and growth for female coaches in Ontario, fostering a sense of community and professional development.
  - **Mentorship:** Having mentors and supporters who advocate for growth (e.g., Big Cam and others) significantly impacts career trajectory.
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### 2. Career Development and Growth

- **Pursuing Opportunities:** MB emphasized the importance of taking big steps in her coaching career, including roles at different levels (Ontario team assistant, U16 coaching, and now the World Cup team).
  - **Learning and Adaptability:** Seeking opportunities for continuous education, engaging in critical discussions about coaching practices, and pushing for professional growth are vital.
  - **Leadership Development:** Transitioning to leadership roles was a challenge but necessary for building confidence and finding her voice.
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### 3. Transitioning Between Levels of Coaching

- Moving from U16 coaching to working with the Canadian World Cup Women's Team involved shifts in approach, responsibilities, and mindset:
    - **From Leadership to Supporting Role:** Adjusting from leading decisions to assisting others in decision-making.
    - **Dealing with Uncertainty:** Embracing situations where the full plan isn't always clear but contributing effectively nonetheless.
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#### 4. The Role of Networking and Relationship-Building

- Programs like **Women in Coaching** and opportunities like the **Johnny Kellogg Interface** helped MB create and maintain valuable connections in the coaching community.
  - Ongoing relationships with mentors and peers have been critical to her success, providing opportunities for collaboration and learning.
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#### 5. Challenges and Overcoming Barriers

- Transitioning to the elite level required adapting to new environments and responsibilities.
  - Key strategies included maintaining a strong network, seeking advice from experienced coaches, and being open to learning from new situations.
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#### 6. Living and Traveling as a Female Professional

- **Living Dynamics:** Katie highlights the challenges of being one of the few women in the circuit, often sharing accommodations with male colleagues due to logistical and financial constraints. While efforts are made to ensure comfort, the lack of after-hours conversations with male colleagues sometimes creates a sense of being "a step behind" in understanding team decisions or updates.
  - **Proximity and Boundaries:** MB acknowledges the unique proximity to athletes and colleagues while traveling. Unlike traditional coaching roles, where professionals return home daily, the constant immersion can blur boundaries. Balancing work conversations with personal downtime is crucial for maintaining mental health.
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#### 7. Coping Mechanisms on the Road

- **Personal Routines:** MB shares that maintaining small personal rituals, such as skincare, nail painting, or skiing in new places, provides a sense of normalcy and joy. Staying

connected with family and friends through FaceTime also helps bridge the gap between work and home life.

- Importance of “You Time”: MB probes into strategies for self-care and separation, recognizing that constant travel can lead to burnout without intentional routines.

### **Attendee Questions**

- Evolution of Coaching: Adrienne asks about the transition from youth-level coaching (U16) to World Cup athletes. MB emphasizes the importance of consistency and being a steady presence for athletes, noting that elite coaching often focuses on holistic development, acknowledging athletes' lives outside of their sport.
- Technical vs. Tactical Focus: The conversation shifts to whether coaching at the elite level leans more technical or tactical. MB clarifies that it is generally more tactical, aiming to develop external cues encouraging athletes to respond to their environment. However, some athletes benefit from technical cues, and coaches adapt to each individual's learning style.
- Efficient Use of Time: With limited training days due to travel, weather, and competition schedules, coaches must maximize efficiency. Building trust and understanding athletes' needs quickly is a priority.

### **Closing Notes:**

This webinar highlighted how programs like **Women in Coaching** are essential for fostering growth, creating a supportive environment, and encouraging more women to thrive in ski coaching.

By sharing experiences, providing resources, and emphasizing mentorship, initiatives like these are paving the way for a more inclusive and successful coaching community