

Educator Bio – Frances Tilly

Tell us about your sports background/history

I grew up in an active house and competed in Netball, Sailing and Soccer early on, before adding rowing, waterpolo and basketball to the mix. At university I continued to play basketball for the varsity club and picked up Olympic handball. Both of which I have played to the highest domestic level; with Otago and Nelson for Basketball and Canterbury for Handball and have been lucky enough to represent NZ for Handball over this time. Since focusing on coaching I have been involved in the NZ U16 girls sides, NZU14s and was fortunate to be included as Apprentice Coach with the Tall Ferns last year on their successful Asian tour.

What's your favourite sporting memory or proudest moment?

I'm sure they were all favourites at the time but most recently, the biggest moment was finishing my first adventure race. I had injured my ankle 6 weeks prior (which later required surgery) and the team decided that we would do it together regardless, despite telling them to replace me. It was a long 9 hours but we got there. Finishing taught me about grit and endurance (and maybe stupidity!), and the fact you can get through anything with your team mates.

What was your worst moment in sports?

In 2009, I was playing handball for the NZ women's team in Brisbane and I broke my ankle at our final training before playing Australia. It was the start of a 5-game series and my first playing for NZ. It's the same injury that has led to my having to stop running altogether and quit basketball and handball.

Are there any stories about drugs in sport that have affected you (e.g. Lance Armstrong, Marion Jones etc), or gave you an interest in this role with DFSNZ?

I was a huge follower of Lance Armstrong's, read all his books and used to sit on my wind-trainer cycling along with the tour. The levels of manipulation and deceit are unreal.

Being an educator is a contract role, what's else do you do outside of this role or things which you are focusing on/interested in?

Outside of this I am the General Manager for Nelson Basketball Association. I spend a significant time coaching the game at all levels and have recently returned from Melbourne with the NZU14 Development team. Outside of basketball, I spend a lot of time mountain biking and ocean swimming with the odd adventure race thrown in.

What do you hope to bring to the role of Educator?

I truly believe in an even playing field and clean sport so I would hope that this belief in the message passes on to the athletes.

When working with youth, what values do you hope to instil in the kids?

I think a sense of the value of hard work and what it brings you, honesty and integrity.

When working with more elite level athletes, what key messages do you think are important for them to take away/be inspired by?

I hope that I can help to pass the message of DFSNZ on to the athletes in a manner they connect with and keep them engaged with what they are learning as the stakes are so high.