

**MM: Hopefully it should have come up on your screen now that we are recording.**

JB: Yeah, I've got that.

**MM: Perfect, so Jess yeah, thank you for joining us on a Friday afternoon. If I can please get you just to just give us a bit of a background as to who you are, you're playing and coaching experiences, the sport and the environment that you are currently in.**

JB: Yeah, erm hi for anybody listen                      picked me. Erm, well done firstly for picking me.                      Jess Bunyard.                      coaching in predominantly women's rugby, but I've done some men's guest coaching as well. Erm, usually around sort of grassroots and university level                      proud of that. Way back when, I also played at a grassroots level as well. Done some county coaching as well recently last year. And then I'm also a Rugby Development Officer, so going into schools really making sure that kids are loving everything and anything about the sport that they can.

**0:52 MM: And what's your background? What's kind of brought you into coaching?**



them as slightly smaller games where we'll look to finesse technique. And we'll look to harness players identifying space and looking at spatial awareness and depth is a big thing at the moment. Coming out of lockdown that seems to have been lost, so we're really trying to finesse that at the moment. But it's just taking it into a smaller game because if they can execute technique in a game environment here a bit smaller, when they take it into the larger, it's going to be better. So I feel I rambled, but I've slightly evolved my technique over the last couple of weeks. I'm still sort of working out what that means in my head, but essentially game-based, but with skills going into smaller games.

**7:37 MM: Yeah, some of the small-sided games and some of that almost like a whole part whole, but the parts section still being based in some variant of the game, yeah?**

7:40 JB: Yeah, massively. You've got to make it fun. I mean players at my level, they're not getting paid, so if they're not getting paid, if it's not fun, there's no reason for them to turn up. So yes, they do want to work on skill and they will enjoy seeing those results. And yes, they do want to work on fitness and some of the ladies love to see when their fitness block element testing we do, they love to see those numbers go down. But if it's not fun, it's not going to, it's not going to, they're not going to rock up. And when do we as humans learn most? We learn at best through play, we have done since we were kids. So if they can learn their technique through play and through fun, that's all the better experience for them and for me. I've got to enjoy it as much, as much as a coach, as much as they have as a player.

**8:23 MM: Yeah, absolutely, and that again leads quite nicely into my next question in terms of where do you think this philosophy is come from? So is it your experience as a player? Is it through trial and error? Like where do you think that this approach your coaching has come from? What are the foundations for it?**

8:39 JB: Erm, that's a really interesting question because I haven't probably gone back to the origin of my coaching and really sort of seen where it come from. I think mostly it's come through trial and error, and reflection and just trying things. I think when you transition from a player to a coach in those first couple of years you are going to be basically be a mirror reflection of every bit of coaching you've previously experienced. Erm, and I think I'm fortunate in fact, that I was exposed to coaches that liked us to do some games. We were, I think, back in the day, we were a bit more technique-based. Thinking back to those sessions were a bit more sort of skill zone and everything was broken down. Erm, so I think once I'd sort of used all of that that I had in my brain I then, had to try and think of actually ways that I could make the session good and ways that I could develop myself as a coach. And I think that's probably where the art degrees and the creative thinking came into play. And probably I'm at my most creative in the practice design elements of it. You know, still bearing in mind the purpose, we don't do like mad stuff just for no reason at all, it's got to have a purpose, but I think, the games are really fun to design. You can have, even if it's just one really good purposeful outcome, or you can have 10 slightly mini outcomes from the game.

They're really good to design and they're really

**10:40 MM: Yeah,**

really loving the idea of themes. Like I know it would seem really mad. Erm, and I know there's several of you that love Shrek , and they went quite excited at that point. I was and they went, Yeah, let's do a Shrek t like, right, that's it, I've got instant buy-in, let's do it. Erm, so sometimes it can be a really conscious contribution like that was, or it can be something that's a little bit subtle of just knowing your players. I think that's probably the key message I can probably impart to anybody is first and foremost know your players and know how they work. And that's not just how they're going to respond in a situation, how they respond mentally, how they respond physically, but knowing their likes and dislikes. You know what they like to go home and watch on the telly, what music they like to listen to

everybody is chipping in and helping each other. Erm, and I think you can most see it if you've created a player-led learning environment, you can see it at its full effect when somebody new comes in. So this might be somebody that's completely new to the game and so y

way that's best for then learning back as myself as a coach, is taking a game or an idea or something that's new, taking it to the players and not just throwing them in without explanation of the process, but actually taking them into the process behind it. So going,adies, this is a new game , and me being really vulnerable. It's a new game. This might not work. I had this crazy idea, I was in the shower, this idea popped into my head about how we could do X, Y and Z, so I grabbed a piece of paper, I wrote this down and now here we are on a cold Thursday night running this game. It might be mad but go with it . Erm, and then I'll often say, f you've got any tweaks mid-game when we come in for little huddle or a water break that you think might make the game better for us, for you as a group of players, please, let's say and w ll probably try it And I think it's just about showing vulnerability. If you can show vulnerability as a teacher as a coach, then everybody's guards come down as a