Fiona's Story

I used to play a lot of sport (table tennis, badminton, basketball) whilst I was in school and stopped when I was 16 and academic pressure took over. I became progressively unhealthier and overweight and inactive until I was 42 and finally decided that I needed to get healthy and fit. So I worked out in the gym and lost the extra 40 kilos and once I got fit, I started to learn to play tennis as the means to keep me motivated to stay fit as well have the progression of playing a sport.

Why learn to Coach?

I have been taking coaching myself to learn to play tennis as an adult and I have seen the difference it has made to my game and my confidence. Also, I have continued to do the strength training in the gym and have seen how much difference it makes on the court. So I want to combine my passion with a career in coaching. I am just starting out, I am going to do my Level 1 tennis coaching and am hoping to get up to Level 3... I also want to do a Strength & Conditioning course and hopefully something in nutrition too.
Why do you think there are fewer female coaches/instructors?

I think it's partly because fewer women stay playing sport once we are in our late teens. Potentially it's social conditioning, that women don't want to be in a lead position because it can be pressure... when I look at all the coaching I have had in tennis and... all the sports coaches my sons have had, we have only come across one female coach, and that was in Fencing. It is such a shame, because she was amazing and she completely understood their psychology being a mother herself.

What is exciting and challenging about this journey?

Exciting; Making a career in something that I love playing. I trained and worked an Chartered Accountant as my main career but I never felt passionate about it.

Challenging; Finding the confidence, I feel my own game is not good enough to be a coach, but the coaches I have spoken to have all been very supportive.

What would you say to other women like you who may be considering the same journey?

Talk to other coaches and speak to Project 500, I have found the conversations to be really supportive. I don't do social media easily and put a post on Twitter to generally ask questions is not something I feel comfortable with. But Hazel put me in touch with Marion, who was so encouraging and gave me such good advice. Push aside the voices in your head that make you hesitate and send Project 500 an email.