

Your Guide to Becoming a Coach

What is sports coaching?

Coaches help people of different ages and abilities to develop and improve within sport. They can have a positive influence on people's lifelong involvement in sport, and can be seen as role models, not only by the players and athletes, but also by their families.

It is therefore essential that the coach is trained, and committed to providing a fun, high-quality learning experience for everyone they coach.

How are coaches perceived?

Coaching is overwhelmingly positive. When thinking about coaches people use words like:

Competent	Honest
Friendly, yet tough	Respected
Good communicators	Passionate

It is not all about knowing everything about a sport and playing it to elite/professional level. You have to be able to talk to people, build relationships and support them to get out of their sport or activity what they want to achieve. We know that coaches help more people get and stay active and we need you to help!

Is coaching for me?

Currently, there are more male than female coaches. Sport is seen by many as just for men. This is changing, and sports organisations are working very hard to get more women into sport and coaching. Women and girls need role models to show them that they can be more active – this is where you come in!

Coaching does not have to be all about spending your evenings and weekends at the local club. Have you thought about running an activity or sports session in:

- a community centre or social club
- a school: primary or secondary, schools for disabled children or 'mainstream' schools (depending on the school, you could coach at an after-school club, or over lunch breaks)
- a holiday sports 'camp' – for children and adults
- youth organisations such as Guides, Scouts or at youth clubs
- your local park.

Ask yourself: Why do I want to coach?

- I want to put something back into my own sport(s).
- I want to extend my social life and create a new circle of friends.
- I want to develop my range of skills.
- I am bored of watching and want to do something.
- I want to try something new and build my self-confidence.
- I want to stay involved with my sport but I am not as active as I used to be.

Coaching can help you do all this. What is stopping you?!

Do I need to do some training to be a coach?

Governing bodies of sport run coaching qualifications to ensure that all their coaches provide a high-quality experience for the people you are coaching. However, when you are just starting out, it is recommended that you gain some introductory knowledge in key areas:

- Sport-specific technical knowledge (either from experience, further reading or governing body introductory level qualifications, for example)
- How to establish a safe coaching environment
- The welfare of your participants
- Awareness of working with the appropriate participants (eg children or disabled people).

Without any prior experience, you should never be required to:

- provide your own coaching advice, but you will be required to reinforce the advice from the coach
- plan or coach a session by yourself
- be left on your own to coach the participants
- take a child to the toilet or help him or her get changed.

Where do I start?

This depends on the country in which you live and the sport you want to coach, as sports systems vary from country to country. Here are some examples from some sports within the SCORE partner countries:

Country	Where do I start?	What do I need to start coaching?	How can I access training?	Is there a pathway for me to develop as a coach?	What do I need to coach high-performance teams? Do your coaches need a higher-level qualification to coach a national team?
Croatia	<p>Contact your local club.</p> <p>Contact the national sport federation through the university.</p>	<p>A coach must have such professional qualifications which are at least on the level of first-degree coaches and in accordance with special regulations (three years of study).</p> <p>Or a person who is qualified for such work with personnel training at an institution pursuant to a licensing programme of world or European umbrella federations of a specific sport.</p> <p>Or a person who won a medal at the Olympic Games, world or European senior</p>	<p>Access through the club, national sports federations, or university.</p>	<p>There are different levels of university degrees.</p> <p>Education at the sports personnel training institution, plus for some federations through national and international seminars. Some federations have a licence for their coaches.</p>	<p>Coaching qualifications in particular sport.</p> <p>Experience at international level.</p> <p>High-level technical knowledge, leadership skills.</p>

		championships, and has obtained his or her professional qualifications from a sports personnel training institution.			
Sweden	Ask at your local club. As a former athlete.	Knowledge of the sport. Basic training course.	Through Swedish Sports Education Organisation (SISU). Through the sport's federation.	Yes, this depends on the sport. Structured pathways, coach network events, support through SISU, university degrees, opportunities to work with national teams.	Experience, coaching qualifications, a licence to coach, ongoing coach learning and development, mentoring from other high-level coaches, to be the right coach.
Cyprus	Contact the relevant sport federation. Contact your local club. Speak to your coach.	A sufficient playing ability, knowledge of general principles of coaching, coach licence, love for the sport, knowledge of the sport and regulations. To be over 18 years of age, and be enthusiastic and passionate.	Through the relevant sport's federation. Depending on the sport, training is delivered out of season. Speak to other coaches/instructors. National seminars, online resources.	For many sports, yes – contact the national sports federation. Development can also be accessed through national seminars. Some federations offer international travel to learn from other countries.	Experience at international level, high-level technical knowledge. Due to lack of facilities in some sports, coaches must go abroad to learn. Some sports require a university degree to coach this level.

UK	<p>Ask at your local club.</p> <p>Contact the relevant governing body of sport.</p> <p>Contact your regional sport organisation (county sports partnership).</p>	<p>Great interpersonal/soft skills.</p> <p>Ability to motivate and influence people to be active.</p> <p>Knowledge of the sport is useful but not essential when starting out.</p> <p>If coaching children you may need a DBS check (a safeguarding check).</p>	<p>Speak to your club.</p> <p>Contact your governing body of sport or local CSP.</p> <p>Speak to other coaches.</p> <p>Through a mentor or buddy system.</p>	<p>Most sports have coaching qualifications running from Levels 1–4. Some have Level 5 coaching qualifications. Higher-level qualifications are usually accessed through application or invitation based on your own experience. Qualifications are only the starting point of your development as a coach.</p>	<p>Depends from sport to sport but experience, knowledge of the sport and regulations, plus more technical knowledge and experience, plus passion and drive to succeed.</p>
Finland	<p>Ask at your local club, or other coaches.</p>	<p>Enthusiasm, passion, time and problem-solving skills.</p>	<p>Level 1 organised – local club usually pays fee.</p> <p>Level 2 organised in training centres (for sports institutes).</p> <p>Level 3 organised in sport institute.</p> <p>Coaches who take it step by step. Also, special training sessions at local level exist.</p>	<p>Some sports offer mentors and coach managers to support the development of their coaches – depends on the sport.</p>	<p>Often, yes, but experience is more important.</p>
Germany (baseball and ice-hockey)	<p>Through playing the sport.</p> <p>Asking your local club.</p>	<p>Experience in the sport.</p>	<p>Access through the state association.</p> <p>Payable by the coach.</p>	<p>Coach licencing.</p> <p>By speaking to the relevant federation.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

Portugal	<p>Through the federation.</p> <p>Through the regional associations.</p> <p>Contact the club.</p> <p>Through university.</p>	<p>Either working towards or having achieved their Level 1 coaching qualification (level required may vary according to who they coach).</p> <p>Some sports may require more technical knowledge and experience of the sport.</p>	<p>Through coach courses, federations, coaches associations, clubs.</p> <p>Some sports require a practical internship.</p>	<p>Entry-level qualifications.</p> <p>Some sports have environment-specific training.</p> <p>Coaching qualifications generally run from Levels 1–4.</p> <p>Some availability of coach learning and development.</p>	<p>In most sports, Level 3 is mandatory.</p>
Lithuania	<p>Local sports clubs, sports federations.</p> <p>Personal motivation.</p> <p>Some sports require the coaches to have been professional athletes.</p>	<p>Most sports require a university diploma in coaching.</p> <p>You need knowledge, education, and ability to communicate.</p> <p>Motivation and passion.</p>	<p>Connect with sports clubs.</p> <p>Create your own clubs.</p> <p>Apply to sports schools.</p>	<p>Tournaments, seminars, training boot camps.</p> <p>Courses, pupillage, colleagues' experience.</p>	<p>Have to have a lot of knowledge, mastery to lead.</p> <p>Having experience is a must in international competitions.</p>

So you want to try coaching? That's great. What do you need to do next?

- 1) Ask at your local sports club to see how you can get involved.
- 2) Contact the governing body of sport for the sport you want to be involved in. Google your sport + 'governing body'.
- 3) Speak to your local authority sports department or office.

Most people start off by helping out a coach. This way you can learn all about what coaching is, and gain some experience and confidence before you start out on your own. They should also be able to give you some advice on how they started coaching and learn from their experience.

You do not have to start by coaching children. This is a common misconception. Get involved in coaching whomever you feel comfortable with. The most important thing is that you can relate to, and communicate, and empathise with the people taking part.

Will I get paid?

Most coaching roles are voluntary, which means you won't get paid for them, but you may be able to claim expenses back. Check with the club or team that is helping you get involved in coaching.

If you do want to attend some training or, along the line, take a coaching qualification, you may be able to apply for a bursary to cover the cost of the training course. Again, check with your sport's governing body, the county sports partnership from where you live, or the organisation that you coach for.