



Ontario Coaching Report Card 2022 Pilot Project





Highlights

More than 1000 Ontario coaches representing over 80 sports contributed to the inaugural Ontario Coaching Report Card

- The report confirms coaches support their communities in important ways. Overwhelmingly, participating coaches have been actively coaching for over 10 years.
- Most coaches are volunteers. Volunteer coaches require considerable investment in education, time, and personal resources to coach.
- We learned coaches love coaching despite the administrative, financial, and relationship management demands that come with it.
- Demands on coaches are intensifying. Increased support to coaches would help them better support their athletes and reduce their own stress.
- Overall coaches believe equity, diversity, and inclusion are valued where they coach. However, coaches also indicated that where they coach, stereotypes around race and gender still persist. As well, coaches remain predominantly men, White, above the age of 40, heterosexual, and able-bodied.
- Coach education and training workshops are highly valued by Ontario coaches. In fact, coaches suggested additional education/training areas related to athletes' mental health, dealing with parents, communication, and conflict management.
- Coaches were significantly and negatively impacted by COVID-19.

About the Survey

- The Coaches Association of Ontario (CAO), in partnership with the University of Toronto, led this first-of-its-kind study into the landscape of coaching in Ontario. Our goal was simple, learn from coaches to help make coaching and sport better for everyone.
- To make it happen we asked Ontario coaches to share their coaching experiences.
- A comprehensive online survey was distributed. We asked about coaches' demographics and status, satisfaction with different aspects of coaching, including their personal well-being, education and training, and supports and resources, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on their coaching experiences.
- This report shares the most important findings with you, Ontario's coaches and sport leaders.

Formatting

- * When this report talks about coach findings, we are always referring to “coaches who participated in the survey”, but may only use the term “coaches”.
- * Responses in the survey were often collected on a scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. For simplicity of communication, many of the stats listed (i.e., x% of coaches) in the report below, refer to collective totals (e.g., combination of Strongly Agree and Agree). For further detail please see full report (www.coachesontario.ca/reportcard).
- * Percentages in the report have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Thank you to all of the coaches who participated. Without your support, this project would not have been possible.

Survey Details

- The survey was designed and developed collaboratively with researchers from the Safe Sport Lab at the University of Toronto, and from E-Alliance, and the Coaches Association of Ontario.
- Responses were collected from June 16th, 2021 till August 31st, 2021.
- Criteria for survey respondents were:
 - * Ontario residents.
 - * Over the age of 16.
 - * Had coached in the last 2 years (Coach is defined as any person working to develop participants in a sport or physical activity at any stage of their Long-Term Development).

Why Survey Coaches?

- Strong evidence exists for the beneficial physical, social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes sport may provide for participants; for example, sport participation has been associated with musculoskeletal strength, reduced risks of health disorders, stress management, improved competence, life skills, and leadership development.¹⁻⁴

Despite the potential benefits associated with physical activity and sport, sport involvement does not automatically result in positive outcomes for participants.⁵

- Coaches and their behaviours have significant influences on participants' positive experiences in sport.⁶
- Despite the critical role coaches can play in creating positive sport experiences and environments for participants, relatively less attention has been given to exploring coaches' psychological needs satisfaction and experiences that may nurture their own well-being and development.⁶⁻⁸

Coaches and their behaviours have significant influences on participants' positive experiences in sport.⁶

- As coaches play an integral role in shaping the sport environment and the quality of experiences for participants, it's very important that their well-being is addressed. With appropriate supports, resources, and attention to psychological needs, coaches may have more positive experiences, more skills and energy to create positive sport environments, and more likelihood of staying in coaching. As a result, research examining various coaches' experiences and their needs in sport remains of critical importance.

This study is an important step in determining how we might work toward improving diversity and inclusion amongst Ontario coaches, as well as coaches' experiences and satisfaction in sport, and retention of coaches.

About the CAO

- The Coaches Association of Ontario (CAO) is an independent, non-profit organization that supports coaches from community level to high performance across all sports in Ontario. We work to provide coach development, funding opportunities, and events to provide support, recognition and representation for all coaches in Ontario.
- We serve the needs of coaches to create an exceptional, safe and positive experience for all athletes and participants at every stage of their sport participation.
- CAO delivers the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) in Ontario.

Values

Ethics

Integrity and safety guide our decisions and actions.

Quality

Provide world leading, high quality support services and programs.

Leadership

Enabling and empowering people to develop into leaders.

Innovation

Creative and evidence-informed ways to evolve and find solutions.

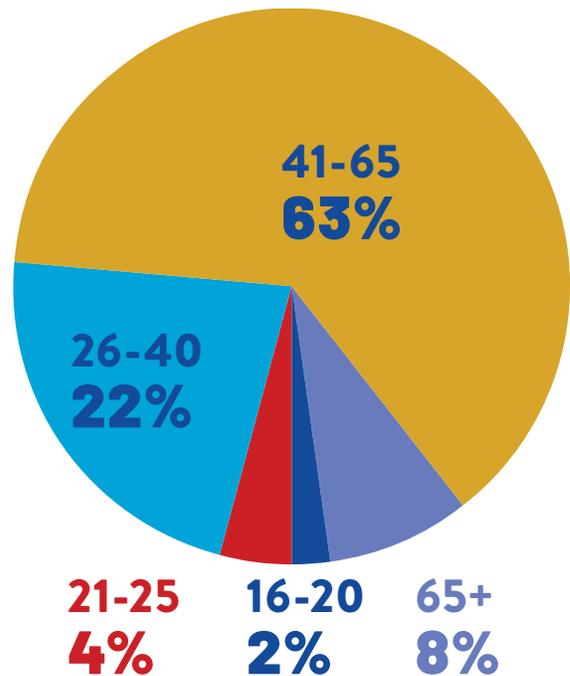


Coach Demographics

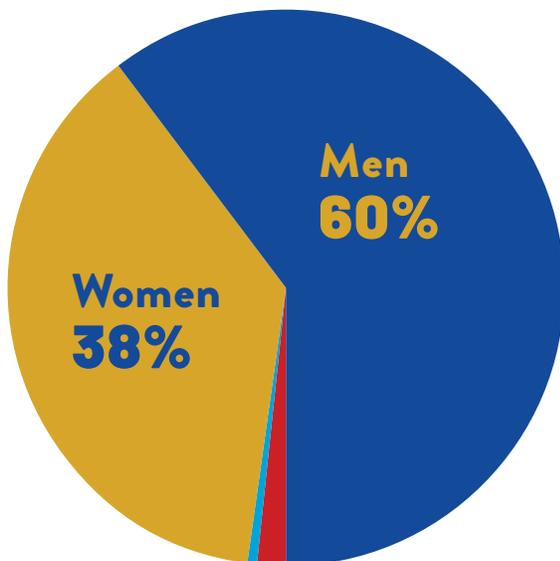
Who are Ontario coaches?

- Coaching is practiced by Ontarians of every age, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, income, and level of education.
- While coaches come from every community, coach demographics suggest that the **coaching domain consists predominantly of those who are men, White/Caucasian, above the age of 40, heterosexual, and able-bodied.**

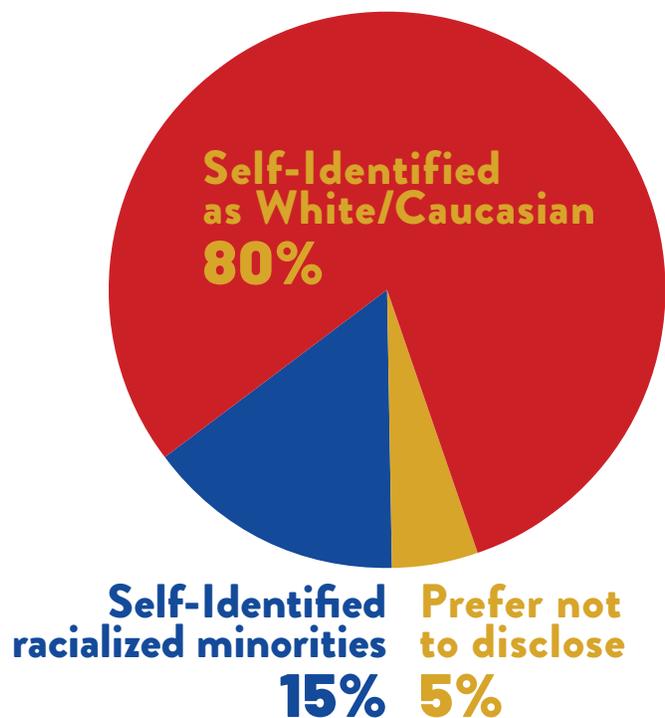
Age



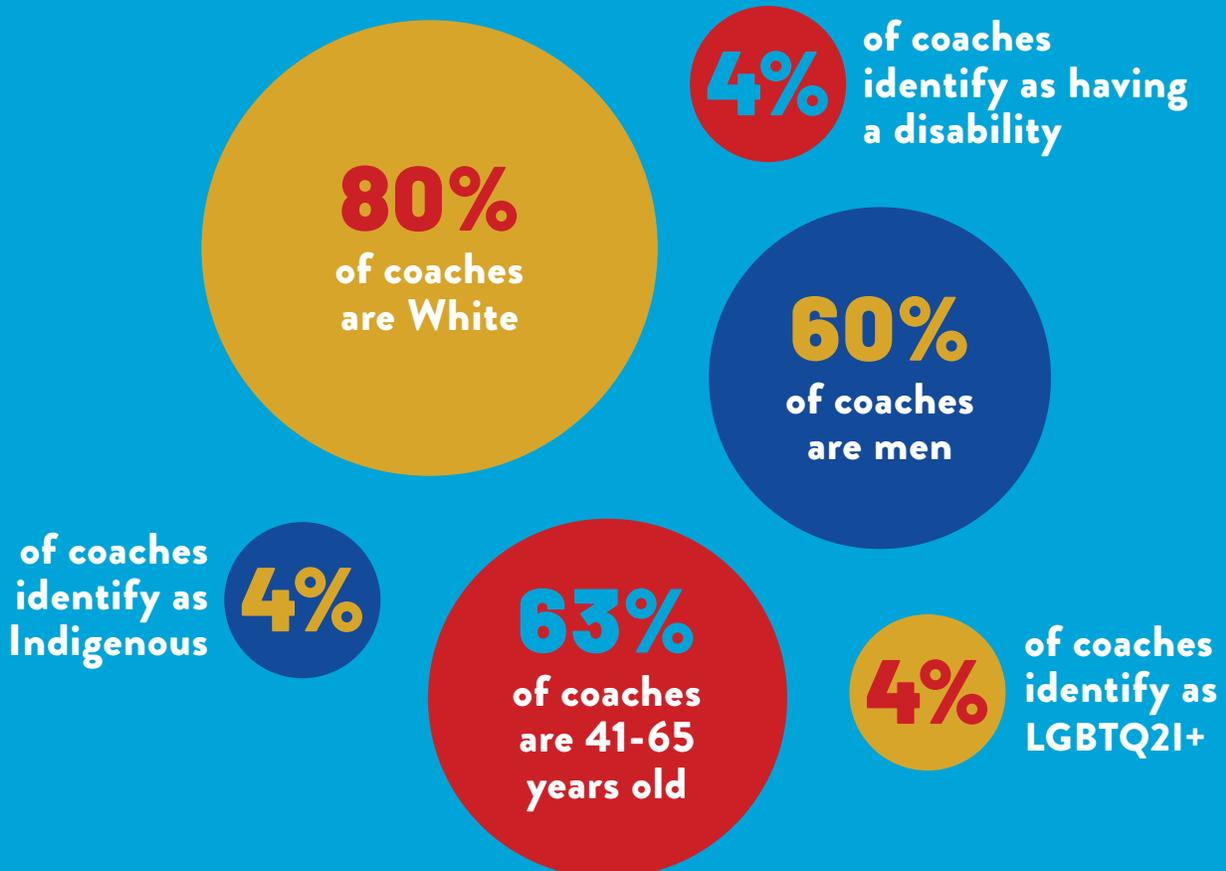
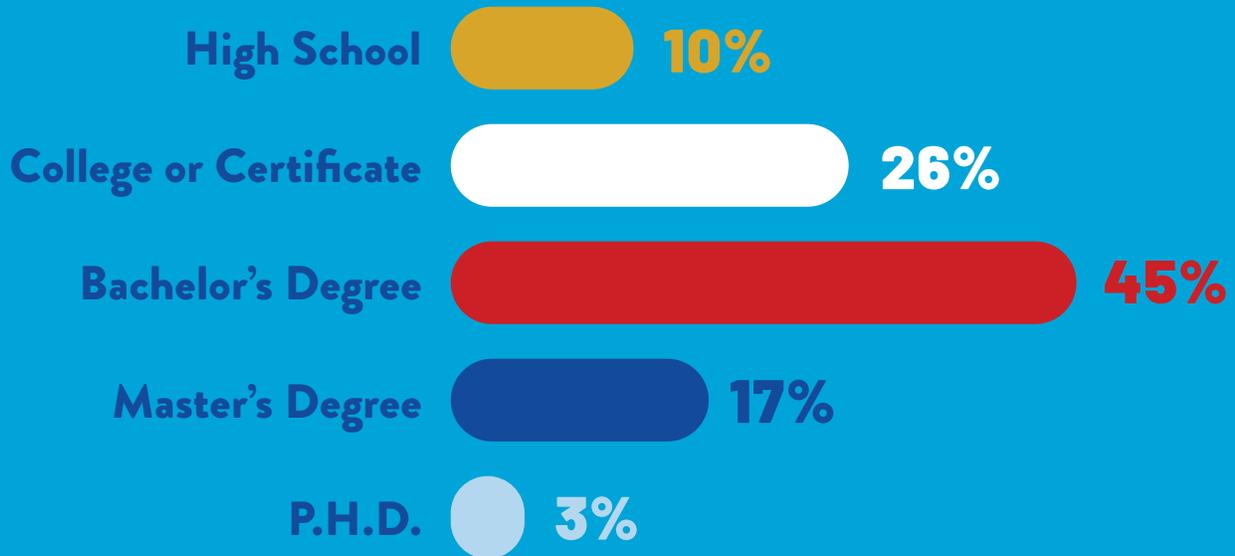
Gender



Race



Highest Level of Education

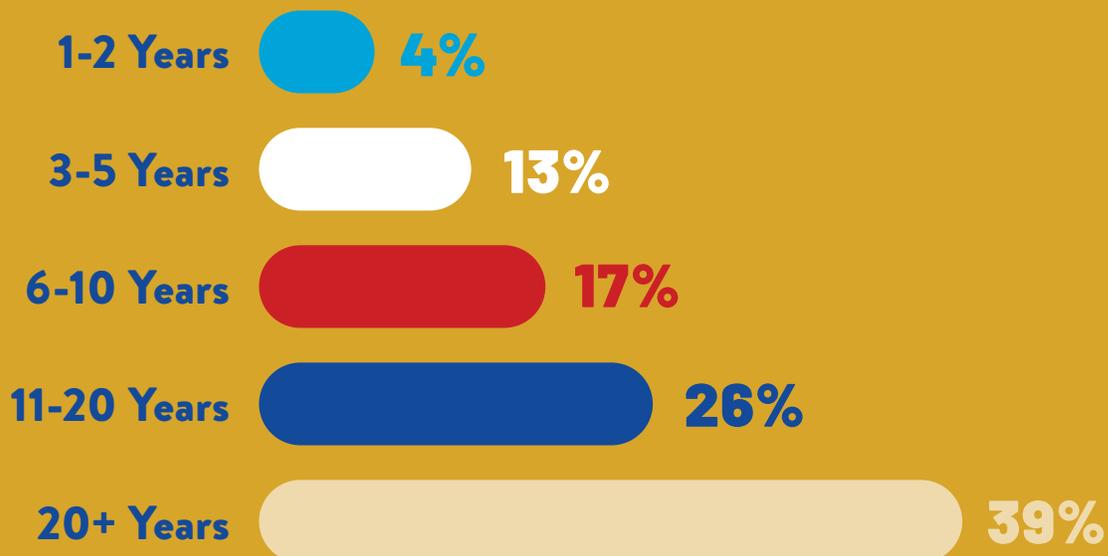


Reach & Context

Coaches make long-term commitments to coaching

- Overwhelmingly, participating coaches have been actively coaching for over 10 years. Coaches who have coached over the past 2 years reported coaching an average of 30 athletes per year. Even a conservative estimate indicates the average coach impacts 350+ athletes over their coaching lifetime.
- Most coach participants represented the grassroots (e.g., recreational) and development (e.g., competitive) levels of sport, instructing youth participants.
- Most coaches have instructed athletes within the middle-late childhood (7-12 years) and adolescent (13-19 years) age groups over their coaching lifetime.

Number of Years Coaching





A coach impacts 350+ athletes over their coaching lifetime

- Most popular sports to have coached:

 **Soccer**

 **Ice Hockey**

 **Baseball**

 **Basketball**

65% of coaches have been coaching for 10+ years

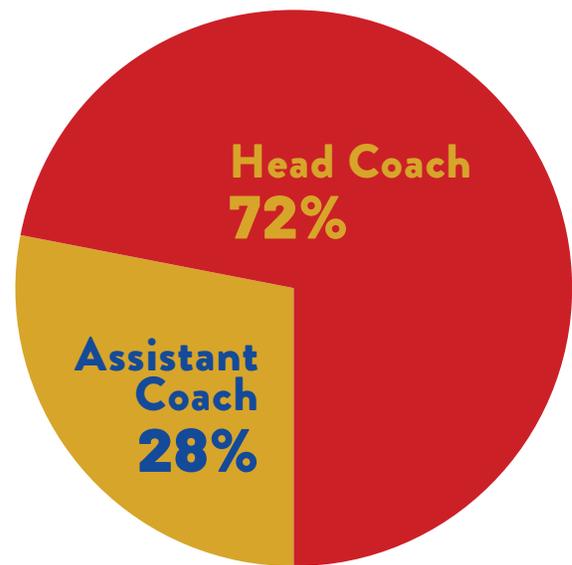
- **77%** have coached at the grassroots (e.g., recreational, community sport, house league, intramural) level throughout their coaching lifetime.
- **90%** have instructed athletes within the adolescent (13-19 years) age group at some point in their coaching lifetime.
- **35%** have coached multiple sports.
- **30** athletes coached per year on average.

Roles & Requirements

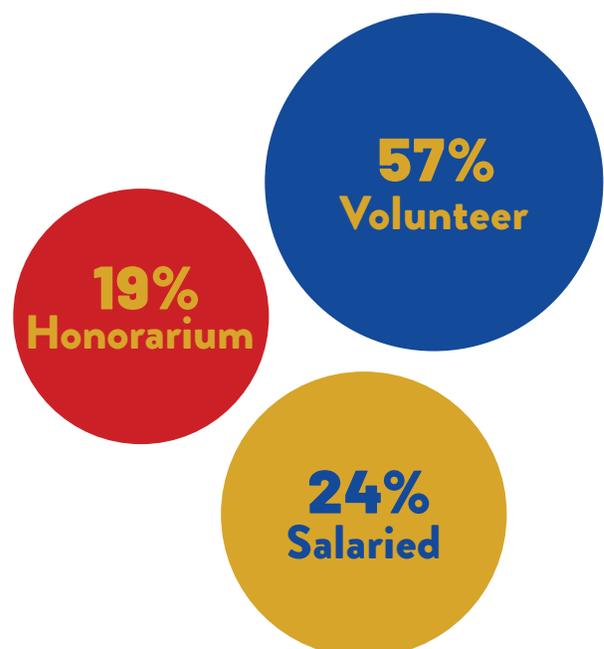
Most coaches are volunteers

- Volunteers represented the majority of the coach sample. **Volunteer coaches require considerable investment in education, time, and personal resources to coach.**
- Reported hours of work between volunteer, honorarium, or paid coaches did not appear to differ greatly.
- Although many coaches across the volunteer, honorarium, and paid categories were not required to complete an interview upon hiring, requirements such as a police/vulnerable sector screening, NCCP training, and safe sport education remained common requirements for all coaching positions.
- The responses also indicated that coaching requirements for hiring were not based solely on prior athletic or coaching experience but also qualifications, such as NCCP and safe sport training. Regardless of the level of sport, type of coach position (e.g., volunteer, honorarium, paid), or age of athlete participants, clear coach hiring practices and procedures are imperative to ensure qualified coaches are selected, thus maximizing opportunities for all participants to experience positive outcomes.

Primary Coaching Role



Type of Position



49% of volunteer coaches are committing more than 10 hours a week to coaching

- **71%** of volunteer coaches do not have their expenses covered.
- Most coaches required a police check, NCCP training, and safe sport education to coach.

Room for Improvement:

- **20%** of volunteer coaches did not require a police check/vulnerable sector screening to coach.
- **39%** of volunteer coaches did not require NCCP training to coach.
- **47%** of volunteer coaches did not require safe sport education to coach.



Support for Coaches

Demands on coaches are intensifying. Increased support to coaches would help them better support their athletes and reduce their own stress

- Coaches held favourable perceptions about their coaching satisfaction and their abilities to manage their own stress as well as the stress of athletes and other coaches. However, they also told us additional resources and supports were desired.
- Coaches were often confident in their abilities to support athletes with performance and personal issues.
- **80% of coaches reportedly served as mentors to other coaches** and were confident in their abilities to support them with performance and personal concerns.
- Coaches reported that where they instruct, access to and the provision of mental health resources remains limited.
- Many coaches were indifferent or unsure of the support provided by their PSO and the CAO.
- Collectively, the coaches outlined desire for additional supports from clubs, PSOs, and CAO, which included coach support networks (e.g., mentors), clear requirements on certification processes, access to information on coach materials and services (e.g., NCCP trainings; mental health education, professional development opportunities, coach guidebooks), and the promotion of equity and diversity in leadership.

As coaches play an integral role in shaping the sport environment, the possibility that coaches' needs may not be adequately met through their sport experiences is particularly problematic. Without adequate supports, resources, and attention to psychological needs satisfaction, coaches may endure

negative experiences (e.g., stress and burnout); the lack of positive outcomes and/or satisfaction for coaches through their sport involvement may then significantly hinder their ability to create environments that are conducive to positive experiences for all sport participants.



59% of coaches often feel that if they had more support staff (e.g., coaches, trainers, etc.) they would be able to coach more effectively and provide more positive experiences for athletes.

- **96%** of coaches feel competent in their ability to support their athletes with performance issues.
- **86%** of coaches said when they are relaxed it has a positive impact on their ability to coach effectively.
- **48%** of coaches feel if they had extra coaches/support staff they would be less stressed.
- **30%** of coaches are provided resources for stress & mental health.

“

Clubs in my sport are all volunteer and struggle to survive - they don't have resources to support coaches.

”

Coach Well-being

Coaches really do coach for the love of the game

- Coaches overwhelmingly reported enjoyment in their coaching position, even though it comes with administrative, financial, and relationship management demands.
- **A considerable number of coaches suggested their coaching position had greater workloads than anticipated.**
- The coaches' responses suggest that athlete well-being and satisfaction were priorities where they coached.
- Coaches often indicated that they did not worry about their ability to achieve performance expectations and suggested that they could improve as coaches. The recognition of improvement is consistent with the fact that most coaches were volunteer coaches of youth athletes.
- Coaches reported confidence in their abilities, and a sense of autonomy when coaching.
- Coaches indicated that being stressed often negatively impacted their coaching abilities, yet this did not necessarily have a detrimental impact on their coaching strategies with athletes (e.g., yelling).
- Coaches told us that being relaxed and happy had a positive impact on their coaching abilities as well as their coaching strategies with athletes (e.g., listening to athletes' input).

98% of coaches find real enjoyment in their coaching role

Research has found that coaches report barriers to well-being, including: dissatisfaction with their coaching position and job security, inadequate training and education, conflicts with parents, organizational pressures (e.g., winning), insufficient supports, lack of opportunities for advancement, lack of diversity and gender and race-based stereotypes. ⁹⁻¹³

Coaching Demands:

- **For 39%** of coaches, the amount of work they do for their coaching position is more than anticipated.
- **For 40%** of coaches, their coaching duties created interference with other aspects of their life (e.g., family, friends, etc.)

Coaches' Desires:

- Reduced administrative pressures.
- Opportunities for funding & reduced financial strain.
- Greater support for coaches (Staff, coaching team size).
- Support with relationship management (Parents, Club Board, etc.).



Being a positive role model in a player's life and going on this journey of sport is truly so rewarding.



Coach Education

Ontario coaches value coach education, on-going training, and professional development

- Most coaches reported required completion of training and education that was not paid for by their organizations.
- Coaches identified numerous sources of professional development as most influential for their coaching development; specifically, educating/training workshops and seminars, informal discussions with other coaches, and reading relevant coach literature (e.g., blogs).
- **Coaches identified topics of desired additional professional development and education, most notably, athletes' mental health, dealing with parents, communication, and conflict management.**

94% of coaches have NCCP training

- **61%** of volunteer coaches reported they are required to have NCCP training to coach.
- **51%** of coaches said that training was not funded by the organization.
- **96%** of coaches participate in additional coaching professional development.
- **95%** of coaches agree they have room to improve as a coach.
- **38%** of coaches are participating in a form of mentorship.



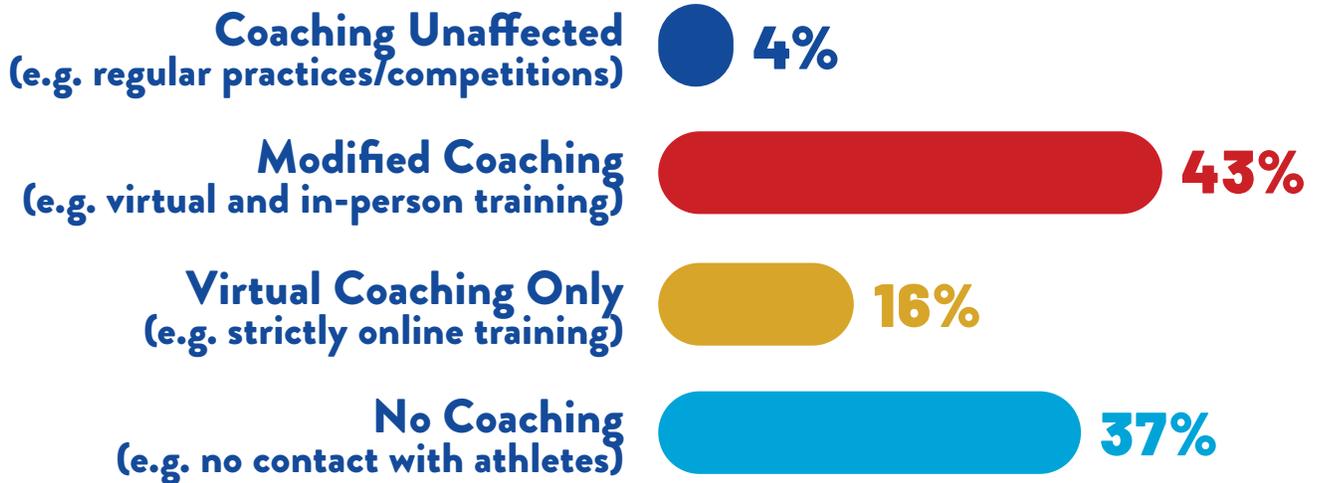
Coaches in our sport are all volunteers with full time jobs - it's difficult to get the certification that is required.





Coaches who are provided professional development and educational opportunities regarding positive sport practices are also more likely to create environments where athletes experience enjoyment, competence, meaningful relationships, learning, satisfaction, reduced anxiety, and sport maintenance.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

Impact of COVID-19



Coaches and athletes were negatively impacted by COVID-19

- COVID-19 impacted the ways in which coaches interacted with their athletes with the majority reporting modified coaching (e.g., virtual and in-person training) or no coaching at all.
- Coaches believed that COVID-19 had a largely negative impact on their mental health as well as the mental health of their athletes.
- Coaches expressed concern over the negative effects the sport disruption caused by COVID-19 was having on their athletes.

9% of coaches said COVID has impacted their plans to return to coaching post-COVID-19

- **96%** of coaches indicated their coaching was affected by COVID-19.
- **37%** of coaches indicated no coaching took place because of COVID-19.
- **58%** of coaches reported COVID-19 had a negative impact on their own mental health.
- **76%** of coaches believe COVID-19 had a negative impact on their athletes' mental health.

Similar to athletes, previous research findings suggest that COVID-19 has had harmful effects on coaches' perceived stress, satisfaction, financial stability, and overall well-being.¹⁷⁻¹⁸

“

A lot of young athletes quit or lost motivation.

Since the stoppage there have been a lot of athletes ageing out, a lot of clubs closed, and ranks have been closed.

In a community where mental health is a direct result of physical health, it has been difficult for our members to be inactive.

”



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Overall coaches believe equity, diversity, and inclusion are valued where they coach. However, they indicated coaching stereotypes around race and gender still persist

- Coaches generally held more positive than negative perceptions about equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) practices and behaviours where they coach, however responses highlight that sport organizations are not immune to issues, such as gender and racial stereotypes. Of particular interest, several coaches remained indifferent on matters of EDI.
- Coach responses highlighted favourable perceptions regarding organizational hiring practices that were informed by EDI.

- Coach demographics suggest that the coaching domain consists predominantly of those who are men, White/Caucasian, middle-aged, and heterosexual.
- **Self-identified racialized minorities reported stronger beliefs that racial stereotypes exist where they coach** compared to the overall sample (31% vs 19%). However, their responses to other questions around support and EDI were consistent with the total sample.

74% of coaches believe equity, diversity, and inclusion are important where they coach

- **38%** of coaches believe where they coach gender stereotypes around coaching and sport exist.
- **31%** of self-identified racialized coaches stated racial stereotypes exist where they coach.

A significant body of literature exists on the value of having women in coaching positions to add diversity to coaching styles and to provide modelling for girls and young women sport participants.¹⁹

Emerging research has extended this lens to include racialized and sexually diverse coaches and the potential benefits for participants and sport organizations, such as athlete-centred leadership styles, mentorship opportunities, acceptance of diverse and innovative perspectives, safe and welcoming environments, and greater participant satisfaction.²⁰⁻²³



Safe Sport

Coaches are still learning how to best create safe sport environments

- Collectively coaches are familiar with safe sport initiatives and are confident in their ability to foster safe sport environments, yet many coaches remain stressed and uncertain about how to manage athletes' physical and mental well-being and lack awareness regarding their rights as coaches.
- The most commonly completed safe sport education included NCCP Make Ethical Decisions, Respect in Sport, and Standard First Aid and CPR. However, responses suggest that renewal of safe sport education was unclear.
- **Athlete well-being and satisfaction were rated as the most important priorities where coaches instructed**, however coach satisfaction and professional development (common factors that impact the nature and quality of athlete experiences) were ranked as some of the least important.
- Athlete development, satisfaction, and safe sport rate as the top three priorities for coaches, ahead of other areas such as winning.

Given the rise in mental health concerns and awareness of experiences of maltreatment in sport, athletes of coaches who prioritize mental health as well as developmentally appropriate and safe sport, may experience improved help seeking behaviours, reduced mental health concerns, a sense of care, safety and inclusivity, and better overall well-being.²⁴⁻²⁷

Safe Sport Awareness:

- **84%** of coaches are familiar with the Rule of Two.
- **72%** of coaches are familiar with the Responsible Coaching Movement.
- **53%** of volunteer coaches were required to take safe sport training.
- **20%** of coaches were not required to sign a code of conduct to coach.

26% of coaches are stressed about their ability to manage their athletes' mental well-being



Future Considerations: Optimizing Coaches' Sport Experiences

Informed by the survey results, the following considerations are proposed for sport organizations and stakeholders in an effort to further optimize coaches' experiences:

Coach Recruitment/ Hiring Procedures and Practices

- Clearly outline expected roles, responsibilities, and hours of commitment for coaching positions to promote work-life balance.
- Regardless of volunteer, honorarium, or paid coaching positions, organizations should make a concerted effort to conduct formal and/or informal interviews for coaching positions, especially for those who wish to instruct youth.
- Sport organizations would benefit from continuing to advocate for coach recruitment informed by credentials other than prior athletic and coaching experience. As a minimum requirement, it remains imperative that coaches be well educated and trained in safe sport.
- Prioritize EDI when hiring coaches.



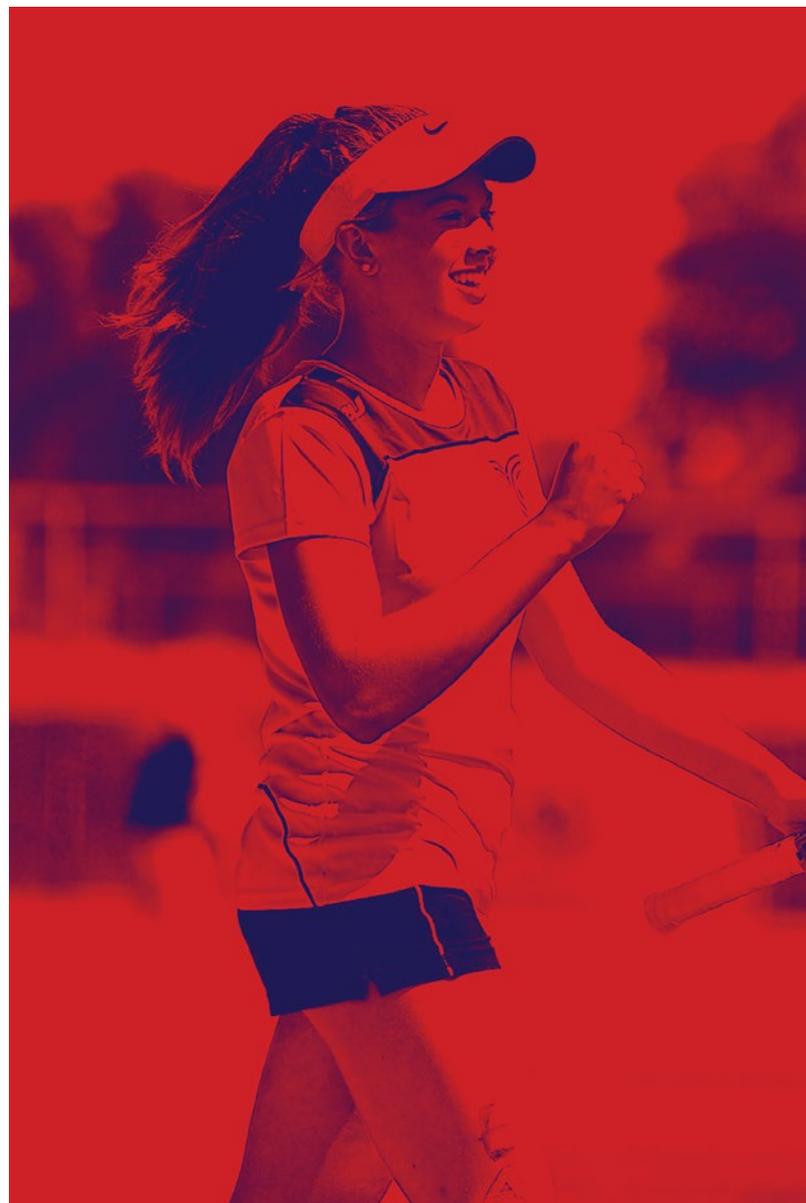
Gender, Equity, and Inclusion in Coaching

- Increase employment opportunities for equity deserving groups, such as women, Indigenous and racialized individuals, those who identify as having disabilities, and who are part of the LGBTQ2I+ community, in leadership (e.g., coaching, management, etc.). Having diversity represented in leadership positions helps to challenge organizational norms and traditional sport cultures, increases awareness about and promotes positive environments, equitable policies, practices, and experiences.
- Advocate for the importance of completing positive and inclusive training courses for all coaches.
- Implement additional education or training for all participants, specifically those working with stakeholders of equity-deserving groups (e.g., para-sport athletes, LGBTQ2I+, and ethnic/ racial minorities).
- Implement policies and initiatives to improve inclusivity, diversity, and equity, such as equitable hiring practices, effective integration of gender quotas, and cultivating equity champions.
- Conduct annual town-halls for coaches to collaboratively discuss concerns regarding EDI in the sport domain.



Prioritise the Well-being of Coaches Themselves

- Organizations should consider providing opportunities for funding or subsidizing coach expenses, especially for those who are not paid. For example, this may include assisting coaches in gaining access to training and education for professional development and/or compensating for travel costs.
- Provide clear information and access to resources for coaches regarding areas of interests, such as certification processes, athlete development trajectories, and coach rights.
- Provide equitable access for all coaches to mental health resources.
- Educate stakeholders on the importance of coach development and optimizing coach well-being.
- Encourage a culture/community of care to improve physical and mental health awareness (e.g., supportive mentors, coaches, athletes, administrators).
- Conduct regular evaluations of the quality of coaches' sport experiences.
- Provide access to education and learning opportunities.



Education and Professional Development Opportunities

- Provide more opportunities for in-person and online training and education. Examples of important topics for future education identified by coaches included athletes' mental health, dealing with parents, communication, and managing conflict.
- Provide access to various avenues of professional development for coaches including formal (e.g., NCCP certification program), nonformal (e.g., CAO coaching conferences), and informal learning opportunities (e.g., discussions with other coaches). Informal opportunities are of particular interest as they may provide coaches with more feasible and accessible means of learning.
- Encourage opportunities for formal and informal coach mentorship. Coaches learn a considerable amount by working with experienced peers, and thus mentorship opportunities may be a particularly efficient way for coaches to improve their learning and overall experiences in sport.
- Require coaches to complete annual or bi-annual renewals of training and education or promote professional developmental requirements/standards for ongoing coaching practices.





Promote Athlete-Centered Coaching Approaches

- Continue to promote education and training for coaches on athlete-centered and positive coaching practices.
- Inform stakeholders of the benefits of athlete-centered coaching for both athlete and coach development (e.g., enjoyment, reduced performance stress, improved motivation, positive relational experiences, and overall satisfaction).
- Encourage mastery/task-oriented climates (i.e., success is determined via effort and development versus winning at-all-costs) throughout sport organizations.
- Evaluate and reward coaches on the basis of their athletes' physical and psychological health, as well as athletes' assessments of the quality of their sport experiences.

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E-Alliance

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gender+ equity
in sport*

Gretchen Kerr, PhD Ann Pegoraro, PhD



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Design by Damien Martin



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Sports of Participating Coaches

**5 Pin Bowling • 10 Pin Bowling • Alpine • Para Alpine
Archery • Para Archery • Artistic Swimming • Athletics
Para Athletics • Badminton • Ball Hockey • Baseball
Basketball • Biathlon • Boccia • Boxing • Broomball
Canoe Kayak • Para Canoe • Climbing • Cricket
Cross Country Ski • Para Nordic Skiing • Curling • Cycling
Para Cycling • Diving • Equestrian • Para Equestrian
Fencing • Football • Football 5-A-Side • Field Hockey
Figure Skating • Freestyle Skiing • Goalball • Golf
Grappling • Gymnastics • Handball • Ice Hockey
Para Ice Hockey • Judo Para Judo • Karate • Kickboxing
Lacrosse • Lawn Bowls • Muay Thai • Orienteering
Powerlifting • Racquetball • Ringette • Rowing • Para Rowing
Rugby • Sailing • Shooting • Shooting Para Sport
Ski Jumping • Snowboard • Para Snowboard • Soccer
Softball • Special Olympics • Speed Skating • Squash
Swimming • Para Swimming • Table Tennis • Para Table Tennis
Taekwondo • Tennis • Triathlon • Para Triathlon
Ultimate • Volleyball • Sitting Volleyball • Water Polo
Water Ski and Wakeboard • Weightlifting • Wheelchair
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