

Dear Club Contacts,

The Coaching Development Committee discussed ways that clubs can plan to keep coaches. Coaches can and do retire for multiple reasons and not always when their club is expecting them to.

So how should they keep a supply of coaches coming in? Our experience is that parents of young children are the most likely source of future coaches. Many of them are heavily invested in their kids' activities and don't seem to mind doing the extra work it takes to coach the youngsters effectively. Around BC we have dozens of coaches who started out coaching when their kids were small.

The following discussions are what the Coaching Development Committee recommends:

- 1) Consider all parents of young children as potential coaches and WELCOME them on the ice as assistant coaches.
- 2) For crusty old coaches who are very competent and find themselves impatient with younger coaches who lack technical knowledge - cool it!!! Welcome assistant coaches, delegate duties and allow them to lead some activities. Enthusiasm and energy might be more valuable than very skilled coaching expertise in regards to club vitality. In other words, lots of unskilled skaters might be better than a few very skilled skaters to keep the club doing well. Outgoing coaches can develop their skills as a mentor with the online **NCCP Mentorship Course**, [available here](#).
- 3) BCSSA clubs should be observing the "Rule of Two" so there are always 2 coaches with the kids. The less experienced coach should be mentored as a coach and not just a warm body so as to have the Rule of 2 followed.
- 4) Prospective coaches (actually all involved with sport) should take the free on-line course called **Safe Sport**. It takes an hour or so and is [available here](#).
- 5) Another very simple online course is called **Coach Initiation in Sport**. This course takes an hour and costs \$15; [available here](#). Clubs should pay this fee for any aspiring coach. Biathlon requires coaches to take this prior to NCCP training.
- 6) Then, new coaches could take a 7 hour course that is now being offered via online delivery. The **FUNDamental Leader Course** covers the basics of speed skating and basic coaching. Its primary intent is to allow an assistant coach to be able to lead a

practice activity while the practice is being overseen by an NCCP trained and certified coach who is leading the main ice-session.

- 7) Rather than force prospective coaches to take NCCP training too early we recommend that the assistant coach be encouraged to coach and help out at competitions. There, their interest will soon be piqued and they will start asking about more coach training. By then the club's recruitment will have been successful.
- 8) The committee really feels that clubs should be expanding their number of coaches - "many hands make light work"- and with this attitude should not find themselves down to one coach nearing the end of their coaching career.
- 9) BCSSA and SSC are developing more resources to support coaching including a list of detailed learn to skate and learn to speed skate lessons as well as the "Fast Fun Friends" resource program to be launched at the 2021 AGM.

The foregoing is a plan for recruiting coaches from the ranks of young parents in the club. Some clubs are lucky and can find experienced speed skaters who have moved into the community. Despite how "flush" the club might appear in coaching we ALWAYS recommend that the club seek out ways to attract ex-skaters and ex-coaches to your club.

Quite a few clubs are trying to get their teenagers to get certified as FUNdamental Coach coaches. While this has NOT been shown to have good odds of recruiting a club coach it still is important to do and expands the kids' knowledge of our sport.

A lot of older "masters" ("Active for Life") skaters come to the clubs for training, competitions and enjoyment of skating. So far it appears that only a small percentage of these end up being happy in a club coach role. But again, even if odds are small, it's still recommended that all adult skaters be asked if they would like to try club coaching.

I thank BCSSA Technical Direct Chris Acton whose original response to a question about recruiting coaches was the starting point for this. BCSSA Executive Director Valerie Linton suggested the addition of the Safe Sport course. Committee members Barb Beck, Katharine North and Sandi Vyse all contributed.

Keith Gordon  
Chair - Coaching Development Committee  
BC Speed Skating Association