

A Coaching Director's Guide to Hiring Youth Sports Coaches



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Good coaching is critical in youth sports. Young athletes are still developing their skills and need a good mentor to help them elevate their game to the next level. Leagues need coaches who are more than capable of keeping young kids on task and working together, as well as a coach who can communicate well with parents.

Finding a person who possesses all of these skills can be difficult and may require directors to get creative to establish a coaching pool for their clubs.

Here are various ways your organization can cultivate coaching candidates for youth sports teams, and how to make the right hire.



Before you begin recruiting, put a system in place

Assign a recruiting director:



The first step in locating potential coaches is to assign a person who is tasked with recruiting candidates. This can be a board member, a volunteer, or a staff member who has an outgoing personality and has the ability to sell the club to candidates. This should also be a persistent person who is willing to put in the time to find the right candidate.

Identify what type of coach you're looking for:



Before you can start recruiting coaches, you first have to know what type of person you're looking for and what skills they need to have. You can start by going through the club's mission and values to determine what qualities potential coaches need. Next, take your findings and create a list. You can do a brainstorming session with board members, current coaches and other staff members to compile a robust list. Then, prioritize the qualities and skills to establish what's most important for potential coaches to have to be a good fit with the club. Also, identify any makes or breaks with candidates. What would automatically eliminate a coach from the candidate pool, and would move him or her into a finalist position?

Create materials for recruiting:



To arm your recruiter to have the best chance at locating new coaches, prepare materials to give to potential candidates. These materials should include a one-sheet of key information about the team, including ages, skill levels, number of players, schedule and facilities. Potential coaches should also be given the club's mission and values, so they can determine if they are a good fit for the team. You can also include any other information or handouts you think a potential coach should have, including information on fundraising, tryouts, parent associations or booster clubs, any training sessions or clinics coaches would be expected to attend, and any potential travel. This will let potential candidates know exactly what's expected before they get too far into the hiring process.

Create a job posting:



Once you have identified what kind of a coach you are looking for and have created background materials on your team, write a formal job posting for the coaching vacancy. This will not only allow potential candidates to see exactly what you are looking for, but it will give you content to post on job boards, local newspapers, community bulletins, your website, and to email out to your network.

Establish an interview and hiring process:



Before recruiting coaches make sure there is a hiring process in place. Determine what steps candidates will go through, including if there are any skills tests, what background checks they will need to agree to, and any other testing the club requires. It should also be established beforehand how many rounds of interviews candidates will go through, and with whom. Let any potential interviewers know ahead of time to make sure they are willing to participate and are available. Lastly, create a list of interview questions. These can be straightforward to determine candidates' coaching skills and philosophies but can also include more general or off-the-wall questions to get a better feel for their personality. When hiring a new coach, it's important that he or she has the ability to coach and teach the kids, but also has the personality to get along with parents, staff members and players.

**Ask current coaches for referrals:**

As you begin the coaching search, you might want to start with your current coaches. They likely have formed relationships with other coaches, or have friends who coach, and might be able to give referrals. They know the expectations of the team and can provide honest testimonials to potential candidates. Starting with your current staff also helps them feel part of the process so they will embrace the new coaches and help offer training when they are hired. They will also have a good feel for who will be able to perform in the role and who will be a good culture fit with the organization. Having current coaches review the job description before it's posted and participate in the interview process can also be helpful.

**Ask parents:**

When looking for potential coaches, don't forget to look within your club. There might be parents of some of the players who have an interest in coaching. A player's mom or dad might have previously played the sport, or even coached a team before. It doesn't hurt to put feelers out to parents before a season begins to see if there is interest. If parents are interested but they want training, consider holding clinics during the offseason to help train potential parent coaches. This can include tips on how to work with kids, instruction on game management, rules and drills.

**Consider player family members:**

If players' parents aren't interested in coaching, they might have a sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin who is interested. If feelers to parents come back empty, consider following up to ask if any other relatives might have an interest. The same level of training can be offered to relatives as was offered to parents.

**Stay in touch with former players:**

When it comes to continuing a club's mission and values, former players can be great candidates. Athletes who played their way through the league and are now adults can bring a level of comfort to both players and the team. Former players will be familiar with the club, drills and league set up, and they can prove to the current players that the team's system works. They also are removed enough to bring a new perspective to the squad. If they played at the high school or college level, they might have other drills and tips to add into the team's existing system. Keeping a list of all former players and hosting alumni events for them can help identify potential coaches. Holding an alumni game, for example, is a great way to see which players still have an interest

in the sport and want to stay connected to the club. Sending out regular alumni newsletters and keeping them on all current email and mailing lists can also help keep them involved with the team.

Consider student coaches:

Not all interested alumni players will be old enough to coach a team by him or herself. In these situations, consider having a student coaching program. This will allow teams to train high school students how to coach youth players without having the responsibility of coaching a team, working with team officials and parents. Having a formal program for student coaches will help establish a pipeline of potential full-time coaches for years to come. Student coaches can begin by assisting coaches with practice drills, setting up for practices and games, bringing the equipment, and learning how to interact and instruct the youth players.



Reach out to former coaches:

It never hurts to ask former coaches if they have an interest in returning to the sidelines. As long as the coach ended his or her tenure under good circumstances, bringing former coaches back can be beneficial for the players and the club. Former coaches will be well-versed in team expectations, values and structure. He or she will require less training than new coaches and might already have established trust and respect with players and parents. Team members will also appreciate having a coach who already knows the ins and outs of the league. Keep the contact information for all coaches on file and reach out as coaching vacancies open up. If you know the coach has a child playing the sport, or if he or she has shown a recent interest in team events, it could be a good time to reach out and inquire.



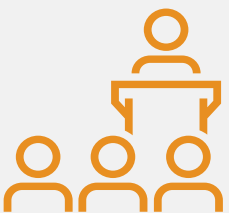
Put out feelers to other coaches, teachers in the area:

You might be able to find coaching candidates through other local sports programs. Local school coaches might be willing to coach for a club team. Also, check with local Phy Ed teachers who might have an interest. While a teacher might not possess specific coaching skills for the sport, he or she will be well-skilled in working with and instructing kids, and some players and parents might already have relationships with him or her if they teach at a local school. Also, tap into local community centers or gyms where instructors might be looking to get into coaching.



Bring candidates to you through clinics:

Get a jump on recruiting top coaching talent by hosting events such as coaching seminars and clinics. Hosting these events will help bring new coaches into your facilities and community and will offer the chance to observe the coach and his or her skills throughout the event to see if he or she is a good fit for your club. This gives you the opportunity to teach the coach skills your team values and see how he or she adapts to the instruction. It also provides the coach with the chance to see what the team and its staff are like, and if it could be a good potential fit for him or her.





Get the word out: Make sure prospective coaches know you are looking to fill vacancies. Use social media and in-person and online networks to advertise open coaching positions. Connected coaches will be members of coaching groups and will likely see the openings. This will help deepen your talent pool and help you extend your reach. Use your relationships with other league directors to see if they have any connections who might be interested, or if they are willing to share the job posting with their network. Also, don't overlook more traditional means of advertising through flyers in local grocery stores, bulletins in church and school newsletters, and local papers.



Target key areas: Make note of certain areas, communities or schools that typically have talented teams and players. You can target these specific areas with your advertising and other outreach opportunities to see if you can recruit some of their talent into your coaching pool. Inviting former players who haven't yet established themselves as coaches in the rival program to coaching clinics can be a good way to start. You can assess their skills and their willingness to coach for your club.



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Sell potential coaches on your team



Inform candidates of potential staff and support system:

All coaches – no matter how talented or effective they are – need a support system. When trying to attract new coaches let them know what kind of support they can expect from other staff members, including assistant coaches, trainers, administrators, directors and board members. You can also inform them of the type of director-coach relationship you'd like to have and review each role's responsibilities.



Detail what training and clinics are offered:

Let a coaching candidate know what training will be offered to enhance his or her skills, including seminars and clinics. This will let the coach know how much your team is willing to invest in his or her training and can help ease any fears he or she might have about any gaps in his or her skill set. If any travel is required for these opportunities, also be sure to disclose that as soon as possible.



Be clear about your mission and values:

For a coach to be successful at a club, he or she has to be a good fit both on and off of the field. The coach is representing the league, so it has to be determined early on if the coach is a good culture fit with the team. To try to establish this in the interview process, be clear about the league's mission and values. Determine if the coach agrees with the statements, and if he or she is comfortable following these and instilling them in the players. Asking specific questions about the candidate's background and personal mission statement can help you with your assessment, as well.



Showcase your community:

A coach doesn't just join a club, he or she also joins the community. This can be a selling point for teams. Show your coaching candidates the family, friends and local supporters who make up your team's community. Tell him or her about parent groups, boosters, and fundraising efforts that are underway so he or she knows how much support they can expect from the community. Showcasing sponsorships that are already in place can also be a selling point.



Tout your facilities:

When interviewing candidates, showcase the facilities the team will have access to. Having updated and dedicated practice facilities can be a big selling point for potential coaches. Also, showing where the team will play games and how far the team will need to travel to can be beneficial for candidates to know ahead of time. Highlighting any other training facilities, the squad could have access to will also help establish the club's resources.



Be aware of why coaches leave other teams:

One way to attract coaches is to be cognizant of why coaches might leave other teams. According to USA Today, one of the top reasons why coaches leave is due to parents. Coaches are feeling pressure and stress from parents more than ever before. While coaches know parents want the best for their child, helicopter parents can be difficult for coaches to deal with. When recruiting new leaders, it can be helpful to explain how your club deals with disruptive parents and what policies are in place. You can also use the opportunity to outline the role and responsibility of the coach versus the director when it comes to parents and communication. Discussing the team's philosophies around playing time during the interview process can also be helpful. It can also be beneficial to talk to prospective coaches about any parent groups the team has, such as a parent's association.

Trying to find the right coach for your team can take time and developing a coaching pool can take even longer. Be persistent when you find the right candidate, but also be prepared to move on to the next one if he or she declines. Trust your recruiting system and know that by sticking to your team's mission and values and investing time into attracting and training new candidates will pay off for years to come.

[TeamGenius](#) is a powerful yet simple player evaluation tool serving thousands of youth athletes, coaches, staff and volunteers across all major sports.

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