

PROSPECTS

Job profile

Sports coach

Working as a sports coach offers a rewarding career helping individuals and teams across all sporting areas and abilities

As a sports coach, you'll help people participating in sports to work towards achieving their full potential. They may support professional sportspeople, sports teams, community teams or school groups, working closely with them to improve performance. They may have a role in encouraging underrepresented groups or young people to participate in sporting activities.

Sports coaches bring out ability by identifying needs and planning and implementing suitable training programmes. Whatever the context, coaching involves developing the participants' physical and psychological fitness and providing the best possible practical conditions in order to maximise their performance.

Coaches must also be aware of their ethical and legal obligations to their clients.

Many coaches combine coaching with other, often full-time, jobs. Many sports coaches work part time and unpaid, offering their coaching services on a purely voluntary basis.

Responsibilities

Coaching roles vary hugely according to context, but typical work activities are likely to include:

Performance management

- evaluating performance and providing suitable feedback, balancing criticism with positivity and motivation
- assessing strengths and weaknesses in a participant's performance and identifying areas for further development
- adapting to the needs and interests of group or individual participants
- communicating instructions and commands using clear, simple language
- demonstrating an activity by breaking the task down into a sequence
- encouraging participants to gain and develop skills, knowledge and techniques
- ensuring that participants train and perform to a high standard of health and safety at all times
- inspiring confidence and self-belief
- developing knowledge and understanding of fitness, injury, sports psychology, nutrition and sports science
- working with IT-based resources to monitor and measure performance
- acting as a role model, gaining the respect and trust of the people you work with
- liaising with other partners in performance management, such as physiotherapists, doctors and nutritionists
- working to a high legal and ethical standard at all times, particularly in relation to issues such as child safeguarding and health and safety requirements.

Planning and administration

- producing personalised training programmes
- maintaining records of participant performance
- coordinating participants' attendance at meetings and other sports events
- planning and running programmes of activities for groups and individuals
- transporting participants to and from training sessions and sports events
- seeking and applying for sponsorship agreements
- finding appropriate competitions for participants
- marketing and promoting your services, if you're self-employed

- planning your own work schedule.

Salary

- Typical starting salaries for newly qualified sports coaches working for local authorities range from £15,000 to £25,000, depending on location and qualifications.
- The typical salary range for senior coaches employed by National Governing Bodies (NGBs) or professional sports clubs is £30,000 to £35,000.
- Experienced coaches working at the highest level have the potential to earn in excess of £100,000.
- Hourly rates for coaches working with amateur teams or individuals start at around £10.

In professional sport, coaches may earn a basic salary with additional bonuses related to competition results, prize money earned or standard of performance achieved. Packages may include company cars, medical insurance and other benefits.

Income figures are intended as a guide only.

Working hours

Many posts include early morning, evening or weekend work. Work may also be seasonal for some sports. Part-time work and self-employment are common.

What to expect

- The majority of sports coaches in the UK are volunteers and less than a quarter of coaches receive payment for their coaching, while 70% are qualified (UK Coaching (<https://www.ukcoaching.org>)).
- Coaches work in different environments, from gyms to playing fields and sometimes in adverse weather conditions.
- Women are currently underrepresented as coaches, making up just 30% of the workforce. However, initiatives such as Women into Coaching - This Girl Can (<http://www.sportscoachuk.org/coaches/i-want-coach/girl-can-coach>) and Women in Sport (<https://www.womeninsport.org>) exist to help increase the number of women taking part in sport, including coaching.
- Unsocial hours and fixed-term contracts mean the job may have an impact on your personal life.
- Frequent travel to reach facilities or to attend competitions, often involving considerable distances, may be necessary.
- Absence from home overnight and travel throughout the UK and abroad may be necessary, depending on the sport and the level at which you're involved.

Qualifications

Relevant degree and HND/foundation degree subjects include:

- health science
- sport coaching
- sports management
- sports science.

While relevant academic qualifications may provide a useful background, you can only become a qualified coach by gaining the appropriate coaching qualification, offered by the NGB of your chosen sport. For a list of NGBs, see UK Sport - Links (<http://www.uk-sport.gov.uk/sports>).

You can start your training while you're in sixth form or at college, as 16 is the minimum age to begin qualifying for roles such as assistant coach or leader. Courses vary in length and may be full time, part time or taken by distance learning. Practical coaching competency must be demonstrated.

Some higher education sports-related courses offer the opportunity to gain coaching qualifications in conjunction with the academic degree programme. Progress as a sports coach is impossible without these, even if you have a sports-related degree. Sport governing bodies have differing levels of qualifications corresponding to S/NVQ levels 1-4.

The number of vacancies and level of competition for jobs tends to be related to the popularity and participation rates for the sport. Some areas are particularly competitive, with progress dependent on reputation and results. Increasingly, there are opportunities for multi-skilled coaches with coaching certificates in several activities.

Skills

You'll need to show evidence of the following:

- the ability to quickly develop successful working relationships with people from different backgrounds and with varying levels of sporting ability
- a desire to help other people succeed
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- team-building ability
- enthusiasm, flexibility and patience
- awareness of equality and diversity issues, including those related to sport and disability
- motivational skills and an understanding of the psychology that underpins successful competition, particularly at senior coaching levels
- organisational skills
- a strong interest in maintaining professional skills and knowledge.

Community coaching roles require the ability and enthusiasm to work with large groups of children. An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>) check is required for this area of work.

Work experience

Volunteering and part-time work are the main ways into coaching, and many coaches continue in this capacity alongside other employment. Getting involved with activities in your chosen sport at a regional level is advisable. Networking with sports development officers within local authorities can also be a productive way of gaining employment.

Employers

Different employers offer different kinds of opportunities. The range of employers includes:

- charitable sports trusts and local authorities
- schools
- colleges and universities
- sports councils
- sport NGBs
- private sports clubs
- hotels
- fitness centres
- leisure facilities.

Coaches may also work one-to-one with professional sportspeople on a self-employed basis and will need good results to retain clients and maintain job security.

Holiday camps and organisations such as PGL (<http://www.pgl.co.uk>) recruit coaches to deliver a variety of activities, mainly in school holidays. You can also arrange to work abroad as a sports coach over the summer, particularly in the USA, through organisations such as BUNAC (<http://www.bunac.org>) and Camp America (<https://www.campamerica.co.uk>).

Many professional football clubs run football in the community schemes in which coaches employed by the clubs train others to become involved in fundraising events and sporting activities in primary schools. Appropriately qualified and experienced coaches may be able to find work within such schemes. There are numerous opportunities to coach in football, disability sport and activities covering teacher non-contact time in schools, including out-of-school clubs.

Look for job vacancies at:

- [Careers in Sport \(http://www.careers-in-sport.co.uk\)](http://www.careers-in-sport.co.uk)
- [Leisure Opportunities \(http://www.leisureopportunities.co.uk\)](http://www.leisureopportunities.co.uk)
- [Leisure Vacancies \(http://www.leisurevacancies.co.uk\)](http://www.leisurevacancies.co.uk)
- [Local Government Jobs \(http://www.lgjobs.com\)](http://www.lgjobs.com)
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- [Sport England \(http://www.sportengland.org\)](http://www.sportengland.org)
- [Sport Northern Ireland \(http://www.sportni.net\)](http://www.sportni.net)
- [Sport Scotland \(http://www.sportscotland.org.uk\)](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)
- [Sport Wales \(http://sport.wales\)](http://sport.wales)

You could also look to local authority recruitment bulletins and local or national press for opportunities.

Information on where to look for jobs, with details of magazines, newspapers and recruitment agencies is provided by SkillsActive - The Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being (<http://www.skillsactive.com>). For links to sporting bodies, see:

- [UK Coaching \(https://www.ukcoaching.org/\)](https://www.ukcoaching.org/)
- [UK Sport \(http://www.uksport.gov.uk\)](http://www.uksport.gov.uk)

While word of mouth is a key source of work for self-employed coaches, many also advertise through their own websites or through directory-style websites. Using social media, such as LinkedIn, can be an effective way of advertising your services.

In some cases, for example in professional football, jobs may not be advertised, but suitable candidates will be approached directly. In many areas of coaching and instruction you need to be proactive in seeking opportunities and networks must be maintained, perhaps through voluntary work, even during periods of unemployment.

Get more tips on how to find a job (</careers-advice/getting-a-job/how-to-find-a-job>), create a successful CV and cover letter (</careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters>), and prepare for interviews (</careers-advice/interview-tips>).

Sports coach jobs

Activity Instructor at Summer Camp USA

BUNAC

USA

Competitive salary



[\(/graduate-jobs/activity-instructor-at-summer-camp-usa-2638134\)](/graduate-jobs/activity-instructor-at-summer-camp-usa-2638134)

Horseriding Instructor at Summer Camp USA

BUNAC

USA

Competitive salary



[\(/graduate-jobs/horseriding-instructor-at-summer-camp-usa-2638131\)](/graduate-jobs/horseriding-instructor-at-summer-camp-usa-2638131)

Watersports Instructor at Summer Camp USA

BUNAC

USA

Competitive salary



[\(/graduate-jobs/watersports-instructor-at-summer-camp-usa-2638132\)](/graduate-jobs/watersports-instructor-at-summer-camp-usa-2638132)

View all sports jobs (</graduate-jobs-results?sortBy=dp&careers=179>)

Professional development

UK Coaching, in conjunction with sport governing bodies, has developed the UKCC - UK Coaching Certificate, which is part of the UK Coaching Framework of nationally recognised standards within UK coaching.

The framework is made up of eight components, covering topics such as participant modelling, coaching strategy and coach education and development. These components guide the development of coaching throughout the UK, with many qualifications being accredited against this standard.

A programme of workshops is available, covering key aspects of the coaching role, suitable for new and existing coaches. Study modes include distance learning and self-study. Many individuals undertake these courses in their own time, meeting the costs themselves. They include:

- safeguarding and protecting children
- inclusive coaching, for those with disabilities
- positive behaviour management in sport
- a guide to mentoring sports coaches.

Further training may take the form of gaining more advanced coaching qualifications, following the structure provided by the relevant sport's NGB, or by developing expertise in a specific area, such as strength and conditioning. Time and funding available for taking further professional qualifications may be limited.

The Level 1 coaching award is sufficient for individuals to take up employment, but continuing to develop professional skills and knowledge is an important part of career progression and further certificates will enhance your employability. Coaches need to keep up to date with a range of issues within the professional sports sector, including nutrition, scientific research and sports psychology.

Coaches employed by specific projects are generally encouraged to work up through the appropriate levels of qualification and may receive funding to do so. Work with children will require you to study for courses in child safeguarding and protection, as well as become qualified in first aid.

Career prospects

It takes time to develop coaching skills and a good reputation, so career progression can be slow and may be dependent on personal motivation. Geographical mobility is an advantage.

For coaches working with professional sportspeople, career progression often depends on results, which may be measured by a performer's achievements and progress, or by the level of the participants' enjoyment.

Career development in this area is also dependent on effectively marketing your services and skills to potential clients. Even in this area, coaches tend to continue to diversify in the range of services they offer. This is supported by an ongoing development of professional skills through courses and workshops and by keeping informed of any arising issues and changes to sporting practices.

Senior coaching posts usually require completion of advanced coaching qualifications and are also more likely to need a degree. The number of posts at this level is limited and they are likely to be with sport NGBs or national teams.

A degree is also helpful for progression into sports development roles. Other areas of possible career development include coach education and volunteer management.



Written by AGCAS editors

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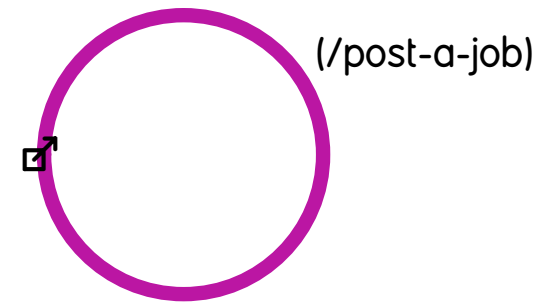


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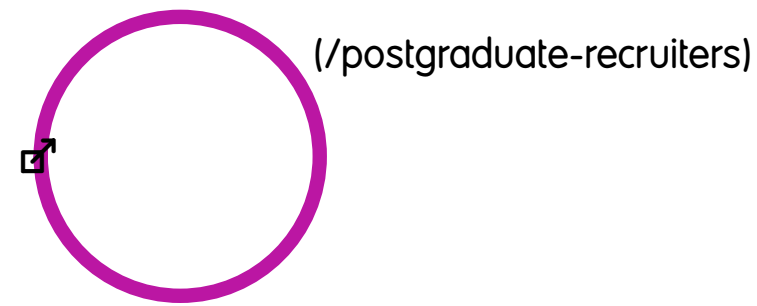
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