



# SUMMARY OF THE NEWCOMER COACH MENTORSHIP PROJECT

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Funded by:





# Background

In a research project conducted by AHC, Participating in Arts, Sports, and Society (PASS) project, a spectrum of constraints experienced by newcomers were investigated and identified, including main barriers contributing to low participation of racialized youth in recreation and organized sports. The results of the PASS project showed a need more than ever before in co-designing programs, collaborating with partners, innovating to reduce barriers, and fostering quality sports programs as potential ways to create welcoming and equitable space for newcomers in sport, including sport coaches.

Based on the insight from the PASS project, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) collaborated with AHC to pilot the Newcomer Coach Mentorship Program in Edmonton. Through this mentorship program, AHC connects newcomers with experienced local coaches who will provide guidance, support, and insights into the Canadian sports system. Overall, the Newcomer Coach Mentorship Program aims to explore systemic barriers faced by newcomers aspiring to leadership roles in sports in Canada and contribute to empowering racialized newcomers, fostering their ability to connect with support networks and resources through facilitated mentorship experience.

The Newcomer Coach Mentorship Program (NCMP) stands out as a commendable example of the types of initiatives needed to address the barriers and leverage the facilitators identified throughout this report. This program, as was also acknowledged by its participants, designed to support the integration of newcomer sport coaches into the Canadian sport system, has been instrumental in providing guidance, resources, and a sense of community to participants.

The following pages presents the findings from the Newcomer Coach Mentorship Program, as a derived from in-depth interviews with participants. These interviews provide valuable insights into the participants' views on the program, including how well it met their expectations and areas where improvements are needed. Through their experiences and feedback, this section aims to highlight the successes of the mentorship initiative and identify opportunities for enhancing its effectiveness in supporting newcomer coaches.

# Methodology

To meet project objectives, AuthentiQ Research undertook a qualitative research methodology, including in-depth interview discussions that were exploratory in nature with the flexibility to uncover and examine topics and issues as they arise in the conversation.

The research was conducted with the following tiers:

- High-performance sport coaches\* (n=3)
- Recreational sport coaches\*\* (n=4)
- Coach-intended athletes\*\*\* (n=4)

This qualitative approach ensured that newcomers had the opportunity to share their opinions in a way that best meets their work schedule, while ensuring comfort, anonymity and

confidentiality in sharing their views. The analysis of in-depth interviews involved a peer review process, where multiple researchers independently reviewed, coded, and discussed the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes and ensure reliability and validity in the findings.

AuthentiQ Research was responsible for helping with guide development, hosting and moderating all sessions, analysis and reporting.

## Date of Interviews:

March 19, 2024 - June 14, 2024

\* High-performance sport coach: a certified coach who actively trains and leads athletes in organized, high-performance competitions.

\*\* Recreational sport coach: a coach who provides training and guidance to athletes participating in non-professional, community-based sports activities, focusing on skill development, enjoyment, and participation rather than competitive success.

\*\*\* Coach-intended athletes: an individual who participates in organized sports at a level involving regular training and competition, who is also actively seeking out coaching opportunities in the future.

## 6 In-Depth Interviews:

- Mix of audience segments
- 5 different nationalities\*
- Age ranged from 15 to 45
- 4 different sports
- Up to 1 hour in length



**Sierra Leone**  
**Ukraine\***  
**Tunisia**  
**Uganda**  
**Italy**

\* Interviewed in their mother tongue language.



**Basketball**



**Soccer**



**Snowboarding**



**Canoeing/Kayaking**

# Perceived Benefits of NCMP

## Sense of Community as a Valuable Benefit of NCMP

The Newcomer Coach Mentorship Program (NCMP) emerged as a significant support system for participants, as highlighted in the in-depth interviews. One participant emphasized that the NCMP was instrumental in helping them learn about the experiences of others, which fostered a sense of community and solidarity. They expressed that hearing about the challenges and successes of fellow newcomers made them realize they were not alone in their journey. This shared understanding and mutual support not only alleviated feelings of isolation but also provided practical insights and strategies for navigating the Canadian sport system. The participant credited the program for enhancing their confidence and reinforcing their commitment to pursuing a career in Canada.

## Different Perspectives Through Coaching

Another participant highlighted the transformative experience of seeing the sport through a coach's eyes rather than as a player. This shift in perspective was described as enlightening, offering a deeper understanding of the strategic, managerial, and developmental aspects of coaching. The participant noted that this broader viewpoint enhanced their appreciation for the complexities involved in coaching and reinforced the importance of mentorship in navigating these new challenges. By engaging in the NCMP, the participant gained valuable insights into team dynamics, training methodologies, and the intricacies of fostering athlete growth, which are often overlooked when participating solely as a player.

**“ I got to learn about other people's experiences and it kind of shows that like, oh, you're not alone. You're not the only one who went through this”**

Competitive athlete

**“ I'm only looking through the lens of a player, but I also wanted to see it through a coach and through like, other coordinators, and like what they think of the sport and why it's important to them as wells”**

Competitive athlete

# Perceived Satisfaction Of NCMP

## Integrating Sport and Cultural Heritage

Overall, participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the program, particularly noting the positive impact of culturally diverse mentors. One participant shared that the program exceeded her expectations because her mentor, an Indigenous person, skillfully integrated both sport and Indigenous cultural elements into the mentorship process. This unique approach not only enriched her understanding of coaching but also provided valuable insights into the significance of cultural diversity in sport. The participant appreciated how her mentor's blend of athletic expertise and cultural knowledge created a more holistic and inclusive coaching experience, underscoring the importance of representation and cultural competence in mentorship programs.

## Learning to Coach Young Children Effectively

Another participant expressed overall satisfaction and cited their enhanced understanding of coaching techniques for young children as a significant outcome of the program. This participant highlighted gaining insights into both fundamental and nuanced aspects of coaching young children, which they had not previously encountered. Specifically, the participant noted learning strategies to effectively motivate young athletes, a skill set crucial for fostering enthusiasm and commitment among children in sports. This newfound knowledge was described as pivotal in shaping their approach to coaching, emphasizing a blend of patience, creativity, and motivational techniques tailored to the developmental needs of young athletes.

**“ My mentor, she’s very in touch with her culture, she’s Indigenous, and she really uses sports and her culture, like mutually, it just helps her connect both sides of herself. And it just made me realize that they’re not just there to coach, they also have ulterior meanings and motives as well”**

Competitive athlete

**“ I didn’t know what it was like to coach young children, people that maybe or they touch the ball a few times and how do you get them into the sport”**

Recreational coach

# Perceived Satisfaction Of NCMP

## Connecting Newcomers Across Sports and Backgrounds

One high performance sport coach expressed their gratitude about the program and noted that the program facilitated valuable connections among newcomers from diverse sports backgrounds and cultural contexts. This aspect was particularly beneficial as it fostered a sense of community and collaboration among participants who might not have otherwise interacted. Mentors expressed that these connections enriched their own coaching practices by exposing them to new perspectives and methodologies from other sports and cultures. This participant described how the NCMP provided a platform for sharing experiences and strategies across disciplines, leading to a deeper understanding of coaching principles and methods.

## NCMP as a Module for Newcomers

While expressing overall satisfaction with this initiative, one participant highlighted the program's effectiveness in providing practical guidance and support as they navigated the Canadian sport system and desired to expand the NCMP across various sports and integrate it as a module for all newcomers entering the Canadian sport system. Participant emphasized the program's role in fostering cultural understanding and enhancing participants' familiarity with Canadian sporting practices. In their view, it would be great if this program could be replicated in different sports and be a module for all newcomers. Participant expressed confidence that broadening the NCMP's scope would contribute significantly to the successful integration and development of newcomer coaches across diverse sports disciplines in Canada

**“ I think this is a great initiative by Action for Healthy Communities just to connect newcomers with different coaches around different sports, so yes, I love it so far”**

High-performance coach

**“ Try to implement this throughout the Canadian sports system, the same way to get coaches certified, they also need to reach out and bring coaches and say, hey, even though you're a new immigrant, you have the chance to actually take this module and once you are ready, then we get you through the Canadian culture system”**

High-performance coach



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