



Coach Hiring and Management Guide For Clubs/Skating Schools & Coaches

(To be used in conjunction with the Coach Fee Guidelines)

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Introduction

The Coach Hiring and Management Guide is written for the purpose of offering guidelines and assistance to clubs/skating schools in hiring professional skating coaches in the Skate Canada: Alberta–NWT/Nunavut Section. Please feel free to contact the Coaching and Administrative Coordinator with questions regarding the hiring of a coach at coaching@skateabnwtun.ca or (780) 415–0465.

By virtue of their role and responsibilities in the sport, professional coaches maintain a position of leadership within clubs/skating schools and with members and their families. Due to this important role a professional coach plays, it is important that clubs and schools retain professional coaches with the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience, which will help the club or school and its members reach their goals. In order to help ensure that clubs and schools retain professional coaches that match their programming and member needs, it is important for clubs and schools to have a detailed and consistent recruitment process. By using this recruitment process, clubs and schools can assist in having a successful relationship that will benefit their members and contribute to the club or school’s success for years to come.

Coaches in “Good Standing”

Every coach hired by a Skate Canada member club/skating school must be registered annually with Skate Canada prior to coaching. Coaches need to be registrants “In Good Standing”. When coaches are “In Good Standing”, they have current First Aid, Backcheck, accepted the Coaches Code of Ethics and have paid for the coach membership for the current year they are coaching. If coaches are “Not in Good Standing”, they do not have insurance or liability coverage through Skate Canada. Therefore, they can potentially risk the safety of the club and skaters.

Annually, every Skate Canada member club/skating school needs to ask every coach for proof of their status.

Skate Canada Professional Coach Defined:

<https://info.skatecanada.ca/hc/en-ca/articles/202679484-A-Professional-Club-Coach>

Standards for Professional Coaches:

<https://info.skatecanada.ca/hc/en-ca/articles/201171604-Standards-for-Professional-Coaches-Policy>

Screening for Professional Coaches Policy:

<https://info.skatecanada.ca/hc/en-ca/articles/201239770-Screening-for-Professional-Coaches-Policy>

The Process of Hiring a Coach

Set up a Hiring Committee

The club board of directors must first determine the process they would like to follow for the hiring process. The entire club board may be involved (based on the set up of your board) or the club board may decide to appoint a few individuals to form a hiring committee. If a hiring committee is appointed, then details of their responsibilities should be determined and outlined. The hiring committee does not necessarily approve which coaches are hired but the process, as agreed upon by the club board, may be to forward their recommendations to the club board. Ultimately the club board is responsible for the management of the club and should ensure that all steps have been completed by the hiring committee.

Set Timelines

It is important that the club or hiring committee determine a timeline of activities, so that everyone involved in the process understands the timelines to which the committee needs to adhere. The following is a general timeline that can be followed:

- Determine the need to hire a coach by a specific date.
- Determine a due date for applications.
- Determine when to advertise for the vacant position.
- Determine the final date for choosing applicants for interviews.
- Determine dates and times of interviews and notification of prospective coaches.
- Set appropriate deadline date for the coach to approve/decline job offer (a suggested minimum timeline of 24 – 48 hours for the coach to get back to the club).
- Set date for negotiation, if needed.
- Set date for renegotiation, if needed.
- Set date for signing of contract.
- Notify non-successful applicants.

Remember that the overall goal should be to find a coach that meets the requirements in the job description, so it is important to be flexible with the timelines if necessary.

Prepare a Job Description

The next step for the club is to develop a job description. The club should determine the following when developing a job description:

- What NCCP level of coach is required for the club?
- How many hours or days of coaching can the club offer a coach?
- Are there additional responsibilities such as administrative work, assisting with carnivals or test days, or training PAs, that may be required by the coach?
- What types of programs will the coach be expected to coach?

Advertise and Network

Usually, the candidate will not automatically fall into your lap and you are going to have to do a little work to ensure that the club and the coach connect. The best way to ensure the club finds the right person for the club's needs is to advertise and network. Using the job description as a starting point, the hiring committee should create an advertisement and network to ask others if they know someone with the qualifications the club is seeking.

The advertisement should also state that the applicant is expected to respond in writing. Be sure to list a return address for applications and ensure that the correspondence has consistent address information to prevent confusion. Clubs can advertise using the following methods:

- Skate Canada website
- Skate Alberta-NWT/Nunavut website advertises coach wanted advertisements in their monthly newsletter, 'In the Loop' and submission details listed within.
- Other Sections respective websites
- Local newspapers
- College or university newspapers
- Bulletin boards and employment agencies the Alberta-NWT/Nunavut (or another Section's) newsletter, local newspapers, college or university newspapers and bulletin boards and employment agencies.

While a job advertisement is important, it is best for the hiring committee to supplement the advertisement by using their network of contacts:

- Talk to nearby clubs and ask if they know of any coaches looking to coach, or if they know of any coaches looking for additional coaching hours.
- Inform the Section and/or your Section Coaching Representative to see if they are aware of a coach looking for a coaching position.
- Talk to former skaters to see if they would be interested in pursuing their coaching education through NCCP to help the club in the future.

Receiving Applications

As the applications come in, the committee needs to evaluate and sort them as per their suitability. If there are multiple applicants, evaluate them based on the criteria in the job description. The best candidate will tailor their resume to demonstrate the skills they have and how those skills satisfy the job description. By doing this, the candidate demonstrates interest and enthusiasm for the position. The best candidate will also have a typed resume and cover letter that is professional in its format and style. A cover letter is a good tool for helping to learn about the person's ability to communicate and relate their skills to the requirements of the vacant position. Finally, the best candidate will, of course, have most or all of the skills and qualifications sought.

If the committee only receives one application, they will have to decide if the individual meets their requirements. If the requirements are not met, the committee could continue their search or decide they need to hire a coach immediately. The downsides of hiring an individual that is not right for the job can be costly, time-consuming and can affect the business of your club.

The Interview Process

Once the committee has made some contacts it is a good idea to interview the candidates to confirm their qualifications and assess whether or not they would be a good fit for the club. The committee should contact the applicant(s) they wish to interview and set a date, time and location for the interview. It is always a good idea to draft an interview guide with questions you want to ask the applicant. Doing so will ensure that the interviewer stays focused in the interview, does not forget any questions and is consistent for all of the candidates interviewed.

During the interview:

- Ask the applicant to discuss their skating and coaching background.
- Ask if the candidate works well in a team environment and to describe previous situations where they worked in a team environment and how they think a team environment works.
- Ask how often they upgrade their skills and train themselves and what types of upgrading.
- Ask the candidate to provide examples from their experiences of how they used a particular skill to deal with a specific situation. For example, how would you deal with an unhappy client who is challenging you on billing and organizational practices?
- Review the job description to ensure they are clear on what is expected of them and to be sure they agree with the requirements of the position.
- Communicate how their performance will be evaluated and how often it will be evaluated. (Will the club use customer feedback, or willingness to assist the club in other activities, and will the club evaluate them once a year, twice a year, or more frequently? It is important that the candidate understand what the club will be looking for in their performance.
- Discuss the type of members in the club to assess whether the candidate is comfortable coaching children of various ages, adults and special needs athletes.
- Allow the candidate to ask questions. The interviewer can then assess their interest level in the position, whether they have done any “background research” in the club, and their communication skills.
- Let the applicant know when the club will be making a decision and set expectations for who will contact whom and when that will be done.

The interviewer should be sure to assess “how” the applicant answers the questions as this will give them insight into the candidate’s personality, professionalism, fit for the position, and communication skills.

Sample Interview Questions:

- How would you describe your coaching philosophy?
- Why did you choose coaching as your career?
- What is your favourite part of coaching and the part you find most challenging?
- What is your greatest accomplishment as a coach?
- Tell us about a situation that you found to be particularly challenging. How did you handle it and what you would do differently?
- What do you do to stay current as a coach, and provide an example?
- How do you balance the needs of competitive skaters and recreational skaters within the same club?
- What have you done in the past to develop program assistants?
- Have you faced the challenge of having too few program assistants, how did you deal with that?
- If you were a parent or executive member in a club, what would you say the priorities of the club should be?
- Tell us about a situation when you and a parent have disagreed and how you handled it?
- What ideas do you have to generate interest and enthusiasm in new skaters?
- Have you ever run into a situation where you felt you could not meet the coaching needs of a skater?
- Have you ever helped organize a competition, test day, club carnival, club fun day etc.?
- What is your philosophy on volunteering within the skating club?
- What is your philosophy with on-ice discipline?

Tips on Preparing a Contract

All coaches, including those only coaching private lesson skaters, should have contracts with the clubs in which they coach. A contract is a tool that will benefit both coaches and clubs and help them clarify the parameters of the role the coach is expected to fulfill. It is important that the contract be written clearly so that it can be easily understood. Ultimately, it is best to have the contract reviewed by a “duly certified expert” who is knowledgeable regarding contracts and can help ensure the document is well-written. A contract can include as many clauses as necessary, and it is up to the coach and the club to ensure that all of their individual needs are addressed within the contract.

***The Section office does not provide sample contracts.**

Checklist of Items to Consider in a Contract

Although many contracts are oral, it is always a good idea to have some written agreement in place. A written contract can be as simple or as detailed as necessary. The format of the contract may be casual (such as a letter of offer from the club to the employee), or formal (a written contract, signed by both sides). What matters most is that it is clearly written, easy to understand, and accurate, not how “formal” or “legalistic” it is. Before developing the contract consider whether the coach is an employee or contractor. This checklist is provided to point out some of the features you may wish to consider including in a contract. Remember, there is employment standards legislation in your province or territory that imposes certain vacation, holiday, minimum wage and other entitlements for most employees that you must abide by, whether or not you specifically mention these in an employment contract. **As with any contract, if the club and/or coach have questions or concerns about how it should be written, and what effect it will have, the club and/or coach should obtain the advice of duly qualified experts, before the contract is signed.**

Contractor versus Employee should be determined. Know the difference.

<https://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/contractor.pdf>

Written employment contracts may contain the following minimum details:

- **Term** - Length of contract; is there a fixed end date; or is it indefinite and open-ended?
- **Status** - Is it for full-time, part-time or casual (occasional) work?
- **Wages** - What is the wage; is it calculated hourly, weekly, annually; when is it paid?
- **Probation** - If it is a new coach, is there an initial probationary term? (It is usually a good idea to have a probationary term, to give the club a chance to evaluate whether the coach is a good fit and suitable for the job).
- **Early Termination of Contract** - If the contract has a fixed end date, what happens if the employer wants to end the contract early? (Remember, employment standards legislation may impose relevant entitlements which you must abide by).

Other Features to Consider in a Contract

Coaching contracts may contain some or all of the following details:

- **Vacation** - What vacation pay and vacation time will be granted to the coach? Is it the same as, or more favourable than, any entitlement the coach will have under employment standards legislation?
 - *Sample: You will be provided with vacation leave and/or vacation pay, and statutory holidays. Vacation would only apply if the coach is considered an employee.*
- **Benefits** - What are the benefits, if any? (Most employment standards legislation does not require an employer to offer paid sick leave, dental or medical benefits, disability or life insurance, and so forth. However, most employment standards legislation does impose certain pregnancy, maternity and parental leave benefits and rights for certain employees).
 - *Sample (full-time): As a coach, you will be eligible to participate in our standard employee benefit package, as described in the enclosed brochure from Great West Life.*
 - *Sample (casual): As a coach, you are not eligible to participate in our employee benefits package.*
- **Work Schedule** - Will it be fixed, variable, or on an “as called” basis? Will there be a minimum or maximum number of days or hours? Is it pre-set, or to be established between the club and the coach from time to time?
- **Rules and Policies** - Are there certain club or Skate Canada rules and policies that the coach must follow? (If these are written, you may wish to at least mention them. If they are unwritten, you should consider including a basic outline of the rule or policy, to ensure the employee is aware of it.)
- **Job Description/Job Requirements** - Are the requirements of the job quite specific and detailed, or are they more general?
- **Contact Person** - You may wish to direct the coach to address questions or concerns about the contract, which arise before or after signing, to a specific contact person at the club. (Remember, to be properly enforceable, the coach contract should be finalized and signed before the coach starts work!)
 - *Sample: If you have any questions or concerns regarding the contract, please contact (Insert club contact) at (800) 123 - 4567, so that we can resolve any concerns before you accept this offer.*
- **Acceptance and Acknowledgement** - It is a good idea to have the employee “sign-off”, so that you each have a fully signed copy in case a question or problem arises in the future.
 - *Sample: To indicate your acceptance of this offer, please sign the Acknowledgement and Acceptance below and return a signed copy to (Insert club contact). Keep the enclosed duplicate of this letter, for your own records.*

Making an Offer

After all of the interviews are complete, the committee will need to decide if they have an applicant that meets their requirements. If they do, they should call that individual back, present their offer and request a time for the coach to meet with someone on the committee to sign the new contract. If there is not a candidate that meets the job description, keep looking and interviewing, or modify the job description to better suit the type of individual that can meet the club's needs.

Remember that only Skate Canada professional coaches are permitted to coach in a Skate Canada member club. This is important because the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) ensures that an individual wanting to become a coach has a minimum base of coaching knowledge. This minimum base of knowledge means that the coach has the basic building blocks to coach and lead our skating programs. Having a qualified coach is important for satisfying the parents and skaters in your club and important for ensuring they return next season.

Performance Feedback

Be Proactive:

- Discuss expectations at the beginning of each season.
- Decide on performance measurements in advance
- Encourage regular discussion
- Meet regularly for discussion on any potential concerns and if there are any barriers to the coach meeting expectations that perhaps can be removed/resolved.

Annual Review Meeting:

- Preparation:
 - Set a date and time, private location for review
 - Make written notes and questions to discuss during review
 - Consider the entire review period
- Conducting the Meeting:
 - State the purpose of the meeting
 - Explain the process
 - Confirm all objectives
 - Credit achievements
 - Discuss concerns
 - Get coach's input
 - Solve problems
 - Set new objectives

Pitfalls to avoid:

- Superficial discussions
- Becoming defensive or argumentative
- Dwelling on past deficiencies
- Discussing personality traits and attitudes
- Dwelling on weaknesses, faults or shortcomings
- Dwelling on isolated incidents
- Comparing Coaches with one another or yourself
- Interrupting
- Talking down to the coach
- Talking about yourself
- Excessively poor evaluations due to a personal dislike for the Coach
- Excessively positive evaluations for fear of disagreement or argument
- Opinions, impressions and feelings (use facts)

Things to remember:

- Everyone deserves feedback
- Behaviours are either appropriate or inappropriate depending on the situation
- Inappropriate behaviour that is not corrected is assumed to be appropriate and therefore will continue.