



2027 Canada Games Aboriginal Apprentice Coach Program Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC), Canada Games Council (CGC), the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sports Bodies (PTASB) and the Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representatives (PTCR's) strongly believe that coaching apprenticeship programs are an essential part of the development of a coach. Furthermore, apprenticeship programs can be used as a means to attract and support underrepresented populations in coaching, such as female and Indigenous coaches. The Canada Games have featured apprenticeship coach programs in every Games since the 2005 Canada Summer Games in Regina, Saskatchewan. The program provides up to two Indigenous coaches per Games from each Province and Territory the opportunity to develop their coaching skills through the Canada Games.

OBJECTIVES

- Build coaching capacity within Indigenous communities;
- Provide Indigenous apprentice coaches with domestic multi-sport games exposure;
- Provide Indigenous apprentice coaches with professional development and learning opportunities to prepare them for high level coaching and ensure an increase in their level of NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) to a minimum of Competition – Development Trained. (Apprentices complete NCCP training within 12 months following the Games);
- Expose Indigenous apprentice coaches to elite/high performance coaches;
- Ensure Indigenous apprentice coaches are prepared to handle a meaningful role during the Canada Games experience;
- Build stronger working relationships between PTCR/PTSO/PTASB to develop their sport community.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Desired, measurable outcomes are established in consultation with the PTCRs, the CGC, the ASC, and the CAC.

- The goal of the program is to have at least 50% of the quota allocations for Indigenous apprentice coaches in this program filled for the Games;
- Two professional development workshops are conducted before the Games;
- 100% attendance at professional development workshops;
- With support of the PTCRs and PTSOs, 100% of all apprentice coaches attending the Games will have been Comp Intro NCCP - Certified prior to attending
- As a long-term objective, 100% of all apprentice coaches will continue to actively coach athletes at the community, provincial, territorial, or national level applying the experience gained from the Games;
- 100% of apprentice coaches, mentor coaches, and Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) in this program will complete a feedback survey;
- 100% of apprentice coaches, mentor coaches, and PTSOs in this program will evaluate the program and provide constructive criticism for the future of this program.

ELIGIBILITY

Generally, eligibility criteria for the AACCP are:

- Canadian citizen;



- Indigenous ancestry as defined by the Aboriginal Sport Circle: Anyone of First Nation (status and non-status Indian), Métis or Inuit ancestry.
- Coaching experience:
 - Completed some form of NCCP training in the sport they are applying for;
 - Never attended a Canada Games as a “coach” in the sport they are applying to;
 - Never attended the Olympic or Paralympic Games, Pan or Parapan American Games, or Commonwealth Games as a “coach”;
 - Demonstrated potential through the development and improvement of their athletes or as seen by the PTSO or mentor coach;
 - Not already selected to the coaching staff of a province/territory’s Canada Games coaching staff;
 - Identified to have potential to influence, coach, and promote sport in their communities to increase quality coaching in Indigenous communities;
 - Trained in the Aboriginal Coaching Modules. Coaches who are not already trained in the modules may be admitted to the program but will be required to complete the training before attending the Canada Games.

Any exceptions to the above eligibility requirements must be approved by the Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representative before a coach can be admitted into the AACP.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- The purpose of certification requirements is to ensure that apprentice coaches selected for AACP are genuine apprentice coaches who will, through participation in the program, gain valuable experience that will contribute to the coach becoming a Canada Games coach in the future.
- In order to be eligible for the Apprentice Coach role, applicants must not have obtained the necessary certification to coach at the Canada Games. The coach certification requirements vary by sport and can be found in the sport technical package.
 - If a sport requires NCCP Competition-Development Trained or Certified, the Apprentice Coach must be no higher than NCCP Competition-Development in Training
 - If a sport requires NCCP Competition-Development in Training, the Apprentice Coach must be no higher than NCCP Competition-Introduction Certified
 - If a sport requires NCCP Competition-Introduction Certified, the Apprentice Coach must be no higher than NCCP Competition-Introduction Trained

Any other exceptions to the coach certification requirements must be approved by the Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representative before a coach can be admitted into AACP.

EVALUATION

At the completion of the 2027 Canada Games, the AACP will be evaluated against the established desired outcomes. Upon evaluation, desired outcomes or elements may be changed to better reflect the state of the program.

Evaluation of the program will consist of actions taken against the desired outcomes and of surveying the apprentice coaches, the mentor coaches, and the PTCRs, PTASB, and PTSO.

TIMELINES

The timelines below reflect national guideline deliverables and directly relate to key program objectives. Provinces or Territories may set internal timelines for the program, understanding, and respecting the timelines below:



2027 Canada Winter Games – Quebec City, Quebec	
2027 Public Interest Form Opens	September 8, 2025
Public Interest Form Closes	November 5, 2025
Full Application Due Date	December 15, 2025
Coaches Selected (last possible date)	January 30, 2026
Orientation Webinar	February 2026
1 st PD Session – in person Calgary, AB	May 2026
2 nd PD Session – in person Ottawa, ON	November 2026
2027 Canada Winter Games	February 26 – March 15, 2027

These timelines may vary by province or territory, so applicants are recommended to check with their Provincial or Territorial Sport Organization.

Selection Guidelines:

Candidates should be selected based upon a reasonably standardized application process that ensures parity at a Provincial/Territorial level and at a sport level. A degree of flexibility will be required in order to adapt to the unique circumstances facing any PTCR, PTASB, PTSO and individual coach.

To ensure the program is as successful as possible the apprentice coach must be involved with the Provincial/Territorial program for a minimum of one year, but preferably upon appointment until completion of the games, and will need to be actively involved in all training camps, selection camps, and preparation competitions.

External expertise could be utilized in the selection/approval process to ensure equity and fairness. It would be highly recommended to use expertise in the identification of appropriate apprentice/mentor coach matches, possibly through involving local National Coaching Institute (NCI) Directors or other as appropriate.

A high degree of emphasis needs to be placed on the selection of the appropriate apprentice coach AND the appropriate environment for that apprentice coach's development. Every attempt must be made to ensure the best possible mentor is selected for the apprentice coach.

Selection Process:

1. Apprentice Coach interest will be collected through a short intake form hosted by the Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC)
2. The ASC will deliver a list of interested coaches to the appropriate PTCR;
3. The ASC will then send out full applications to the interested coaches;
4. Once full applications have been returned, including the PTASB and PTSO support sign-off form, PTCR's will work with PTASB's and PTSO's to make final selection for the program;
5. If feasible, the PTCR will engage the PTSO and PTASB in apprentice recruitment process prior to intake.



Mentor Coach:

A mentor coach will need to be assigned to each apprentice coach. The mentor coach could be a member of the Games' coaching staff, or a non-staff mentor assigned from within the sport. An additional mentor may be assigned to the apprentice at the discretion of the PTCR, they may serve in a supporting role to both apprentices, should the Head Coach not be selected until later in the year.

The mentor coach should, if possible, accompany the apprentice coach to the professional development workshops. If the mentor coach is not part of the Games' coaching staff, they are not considered part of the Provincial/Territorial Team and will not be provided the privileges of accredited team staff, including, but not limited to travel, meals and accommodations. There are opportunities for non-Games' staff mentor coaches to get accredited at the Games, but all associated costs would be the responsibility of the mentor coach, their PTSO, their NSO or their PT Coaching Association/Government.

Professional Development:

Professional development (PD) sessions are crucial for apprentice coaches. Two PD sessions will be scheduled for AACP in the years leading up to the Games. Where financially possible, mentor coaches are strongly encouraged to attend and take part in the Professional Development sessions.

All Apprentices and Mentors will be provided an online Community of Practice to join, using Microsoft Teams, or other functional platform, from the time of selection to allow coaches to build their network and maintain relationships and knowledge built through this program. These coaches will be encouraged to remain involved in the CoP beyond their event to allow further knowledge sharing to the new generation of Apprentices and Mentors.

Apprentice Coach Role:

Apprentice coaches attend the Canada Games to provide them with a multisport experience and the opportunity to observe and learn from their mentor coaches (and other Level 3 or NCCP Competition – Development certified coaches). The apprentice coach should have a specific and meaningful role within the team. Apprentice coaches cannot fulfill the role of a coach, as outlined in the sports technical package (i.e., AACP apprentice coaches may not be counted as a team's second coach to fulfill a female coaching requirement in a technical package). See Appendix A for two examples.

The apprentice coach will be provided with an accreditation at the Games. This accreditation will provide the coach with the same access as the other coaches. Due to the technical regulations of certain sports, apprentice coaches may not have access to the competition area in all sports.

Any sport-specific regulations regarding the AACP apprentice coach program will be noted in the sports technical package.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION, and FINANCING:

In order to operate programs such as these effectively, there is a need to create a partnership that will ensure resources (financial and human) from a variety of sources to create an appropriate program. The leadership of the 2025 AACP will come from the ASC, with support from the CAC, PTCRs, PTASBs, PSOs and the CGC. This document will act as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the involved parties to ensure the various roles and responsibilities for successful program delivery are clearly articulated.

The following is an overview of the various partners' roles and responsibilities for this program:



Aboriginal Sport Circle

- Approval and Leadership of the AACP (shared with PTCRs)
- Approval of Apprenticeship Program Guidelines
- Develop the creation of selection criteria
- On-going evaluation of AACP with PTASBs, PTCRs, Indigenous apprentice & mentor coaches (develop tracking & evaluation procedures, conduct evaluations).
- Evaluations provided to CGC for reporting to Federal & P/T Government partners
- Promotion of the program (external)
- Communication with key stakeholders (PTASBs/CAC/CGC)
- Leadership of Professional Development sessions.
- Provide the infrastructure needed for the Community of Practice repository including resources and access.

Canada Games Council

- Approval of AACP
- Approval of Apprenticeship Program Guidelines (shared with ASC)
- On-going evaluation of program objectives based on CAC evaluations of identified stakeholders. Reporting of evaluations to Federal & P/T Government partners.
- Promotion of the program (external)
- Communication with key stakeholders (Chefs de Mission/CAC)
- Ensure accreditation with the host
- Ensure program requirements are built into sport selection numbers
- Work with National Sport Organizations (NSOs) to determine level of access provided to apprentice coaches.

Coaching Association of Canada

- On-going evaluation of AACP with PTCRs, apprentice & mentor coaches
- Promotion of the program (external)
- Communication with key stakeholders (ASC/PTCRs/CGC)

Provincial/Territorial Governments / Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representatives

- Create and manage the selection process of AACP coaches with PTSOs
- Select apprentice coaches with PTASBs
- *Cost-share the transportation, accommodation, and food of the apprentice coaches and mentors to the Professional Development sessions*
- Provide NCCP Mentorship module workshop and professional development opportunities for the mentors
- On-going evaluation of the program in partnership with PTSOs and PTASBs
- Promotion of the program
- Facilitation of local peer support for apprentice coaches involved in Games
- Work with PTSOs to ensure apprentice coaches are fulfilling pre-game, games time, and post games requirements of the AACP.
- Continue to monitor and support the progress of the apprentice's certification process up to twelve (12) months post-Games

Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sport Bodies

- Assistant Leadership of the AACP (shared with the PTCR's and CAC)
- Assist in the selection of the Indigenous apprentice and mentor coaches in conjunction with the PTCRs
- Nominate apprentice and mentor coaches
- Provide certification workshop(s) for apprentice coaches and mentors on the Aboriginal Coaching Modules
- Promotion of the program



- *Cost sharing with National Sport Organizations (NSOs) for the attainment of NCCP training and certification, where necessary
- *Cost-share the transportation, accommodation, and food of the apprentice coaches and mentors to the Professional Development session, if necessary*
- Seek out grants to assist in covering costs related to the attainment of NCCP training and certification of identified apprentice coaches, if necessary
- Work with PTCRs and PTSOs to ensure apprentice coaches are fulfilling pre games, games time, and post games requirements of the AACP.

National Sport Organizations

- Promotion of the program
- Assist in the identification of appropriate mentors within Provinces and Territories, when required
- Setting competition area access for apprentice coaches

Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations

- Promotion of the program
- On-going evaluation of the program in partnership with PTASBs and PTCRs
- Cost-share the transportation, accommodation, and food of the apprentice and mentor coaches to the Professional Development session, when required.
- Fund expenses related to the apprentice coach's involvement with all training camps, selection camps, and preparation competitions pre games when required.
- Nominate apprentice and mentor coaches
- Work with Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representative to ensure apprentice coaches are fulfilling pre games, games time, and post games requirements of the AACP.

Canada Games Host Society

- Promotion of the program
- Provision of accommodation, accreditation, and food for the apprentice coaches (within the currently allocated participant quota for the Games, i.e., no new costs)
- Provision of facilities for professional development seminars prior to and during Games where necessary.

*Cost sharing will vary across jurisdictions and PTASBs, PTCRs and PTSOs, before endorsing an apprentice, these responsibilities should be discussed and determined. The costs for all apprentice coaches to attend the Professional Development Seminar could be equalized so that the location of the seminar will not overly impact costs to all partners. It will be the responsibility of the PTCR group to determine the procedures around any cost sharing.



Appendix A

Technical Package Coaching Quota Example

Statement: Apprentice coaches cannot fulfill the role of a coach, as outlined in the sports Technical Package (i.e., AACP coaches may not be counted as a team's second coach in order to fulfill a female coaching requirement in a Technical Package)

Example 1

The Sport of Diving has a Technical Package quota of 2 coaches. If a Provincial/Territorial team has female divers, they must have a female coach. An apprentice coach of AACP does not count as the female coach needed to fulfill this requirement as the apprentice coach is an additional position within the PTs diving team (i.e., 2 coaches plus an apprentice coach). A coach cannot be both an apprentice coach, and the head or assistant coach of a PT team as outlined by the Technical Package. This does not mean the apprentice coach can't fulfill a meaningful role within the team.

If the Diving team requires a female coach, and the only coach available is the apprentice coach, the apprentice coach may apply to the Canada Games Council for a coach certification exemption. If successful, the apprentice coach becomes the diving team's female coach and is no longer part of the apprentice coach program.

Example 2

A women's softball team has a Technical Package quota of 2 coaches and one of the coaches must be female. If a Provincial/Territorial team names only one coach (who is female) the apprentice coach does not count as the team's second coach. The team would have 1 coach and 1 apprentice coach.

If the apprentice coach/Provincial/Territorial team wishes, they may apply for a coach certification exemption from the Canada Games Council and if successful become the team's second coach. The coach would no longer be part of AACP.

Additionally, in both examples 1 and 2, an apprentice coach may complete their NCCP level 3 certification or Comp-Dev certification prior to the Canada Games. In such a scenario the coach would still be permitted to be part of AACP, but still could not act as both an apprentice coach and a coach as outlined in the sports Technical Package.



Appendix B Contact Information

Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sport Bodies

Alberta:	Kyra Buchan, Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Coordinator Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta (ISCA) k.buchan@isportab.com
British Columbia:	Lara Mussell, Executive Director, Sport Development & Community Engagement Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council (ISPARC) lmussell@isparc.ca
Manitoba:	Riya Donnelly, Major Games Coordinator Manitoba Aboriginal Sport Circle (MASRC) riya.donnelly@masrc.com
New Brunswick:	Cherie Campbell, Program Director Aboriginal Sport and Recreation New Brunswick cherie.campbell@asrnb.ca
Newfoundland & Labrador:	David Winters, Team Indigenous NL Coordinator Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle Newfoundland & Labrador (ASRCNL) davidwinters@asrcnl.com
Northwest Territories:	Lori Rutherford-Simon, Leadership Development Manager Indigenous Sport Circle NWT lori@iscnwt.ca
Nova Scotia:	Terry Bernard, Aboriginal Sport Consultant Mi'Kmaq Kina' Matnewey terry@kinu.ca
Nunavut:	Jeff Seeteenak, Sport, and Recreation Development Officer Sport and Recreation Division, Community & Government Services, Government of Nunavut jseeteenak@gov.nu.ca
Ontario:	Blue Hill, Coach and Athlete Development Coordinator Indigenous Sport & Wellness Ontario (ISWO) seth.blue.hill@iswo.ca
Prince Edward Island:	Lynn Anne Hogan, Manager PEI Aboriginal Sport Circle lahogan@mcpei.ca
Québec:	Colette Bilodeau, Conseillère en saines habitudes de vie/Healthy Lifestyles Advisor Commission de la santé et des services sociaux des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador/First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission colette.bilodeau@cssspnql.com



Saskatchewan: April Tipewan, Sports Coordinator
Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)
april.tipewan@fsin.com

Yukon: Gael Marchand, Executive Director
Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle (YASC)
ed@yasc.ca

Provincial/Territorial Coaching Representatives

Alberta: Bonnie Feakes, Senior Sport Consultant
Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation
Bonnie.Feakes@gov.ab.ca

British Columbia: Emily Vickery, Senior Coordinator, Sport
Kevin Bowie, Sport Development Manager
viaSport
coaches@viasport.ca

Manitoba: Susan Lamboo, Coaching Manager
Sport Manitoba Coaching
Susan.lamboo@sportmanitoba.ca

New Brunswick: Claude Vautour
Sport NB
Claude.vautour@sportnb.com

Newfoundland & Labrador: Mark Marshall, Sport Development Director
Sport Newfoundland and Labrador
mmarshall@sportnl.ca

Northwest Territories: Spider Jones, Coach Development Lead
Sport North Federation
coaching@sportnorth.com

Nova Scotia: Mike Hudson, Sport Consultant
Department of Health and Wellness
Mike.hudson@gov.ns.ca

Nunavut: Mariele dePeuter, Director Sport and Recreation
mdepeuter@gov.ns.ca

Ontario: Brooke Leonardo, Senior Lead Communications
Coaches Association of Ontario
brooke@coachesontario.ca

Prince Edward Island: Lynn Boudreau, Sport PEI / Joanne Wallace, Government of PEI
lboudreau@sportpei.pe.ca

Québec: Éric Pilote



Chef de mission pour la délégation du Québec
eric.pilote@education.gouv.qc.ca

Saskatchewan:

Nick Baker, Executive Director
Coaches Association of Saskatchewan
nbaker@sasksport.ca

Yukon:

Trevor Twardochleb, Sport Consultant and Coaching Coordinator
Sport and Recreation, Department of Community Services
Trevor.Twardochleb@gov.yk.ca



APPENDIX C

Partner Contacts

Aboriginal Sport Circle

Krista Hodder

Senior Coordinator, Programs & Events

khodder@aboriginalsportcircle.ca

Jacob Ruest

Aboriginal Coaching Program Coordinator

jruest@aboriginalsportcircle.ca

Coaching Association of Canada

Andrea Johnson

Manager, Equity Programs

ajohnson@coach.ca

Canada Games Council

Aaron Bruce

Vice President, Sport, and Games

abruce@canadagames.ca