

## VIASPORT COACHING RESEARCH 2019

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

viaSport's vision is a society where people and communities are truly healthy, vibrant and connected because they value and participate in sport experiences that are safe, inclusive and meaningful. This vision inspires our commitment to attracting and retaining participants in sport in British Columbia, an objective that relies on high quality coaching to achieve success. Not only are coaches considered participants themselves, but they are also invaluable contributors to the delivery of quality sport experiences.

Recognizing the importance of the role of coaches within the system, viaSport conducted research to gain a deeper understanding of the enablers and challenges related to the following themes:

1. RECRUITMENT – all participants have access to a qualified coach.
2. TRAINING & EDUCATION – all coaches have access to high quality training and opportunities to advance their education.
3. RETENTION – coaches are recognized for their efforts and accomplishments.
4. STANDARDS – all sport organizations uphold minimum coaching standards to protect coaches and their athletes.

An independent researcher was contracted to collect data from six different key stakeholder groups.

Surveys were conducted with the following groups:

- Local Sport Organizations (LSOs): 142 respondents
- Coach Developers: 124 respondents
- Coaches: 543 respondents

Interviews were also conducted with 15 Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs), seven Regional Alliance (RA) centres and six members of the viaSport Coach Advisory Group. The following findings represent respondents' opinions and perspectives on the aforementioned themes, providing valuable insight into the current realities of coaching in B.C.

## RECRUITMENT FINDINGS

Recruitment of coaches was viewed primarily as the responsibility of Local Sport Organizations. However, the majority of LSOs indicated that they struggle to recruit coaches. Other themes that emerged related to recruitment included:

- It was most common for former athletes or parents to become coaches. 75 per cent of coaches surveyed indicated they began coaching to give back to their sport and 52 per cent reported coaching for family reasons.
- A welcoming culture was found to be the most important aspect of recruitment, followed by achievable training requirements.
- LSOs look for coaches who are willing to learn, who have some knowledge of the sport and who can meet the time commitments.

## RETENTION FINDINGS

93 per cent of coaches reported staying in coaching because they enjoyed watching athletes develop. However, turnover of coaches was still reported as an issue. Other themes that emerged included:

- 62 per cent of coaches surveyed were volunteers.
- The biggest challenge for coaches was sport politics, which was reported as a bigger concern than either the time or financial commitments involved with coaching.
- While it was indicated that professional development opportunities can be helpful in retaining coaches, one third of coaches don't know how to access those opportunities.
- Coaches reported an average satisfaction rating of two out of five, indicating poor communication from their primary sport organization (LSO or PSO). Coaches further specified they strongly prefer email communication over other platforms.

## EDUCATION FINDINGS

90 per cent of coaches believe coach education to be very important, however, it was also found that:

- Frequency of availability of courses was listed as the main barrier in NCCP participation, followed by time commitment.

- Regional Alliance organizations reported low attendance at multi-sport courses and indicated course cancellations as a challenge.
- Most LSOs are providing financial support for coaches to complete basic NCCP training and professional development.
- Only one third of coaches recognized there were opportunities for them to develop through mentorship. Coaches who wish to engage in these mentorship relationships are specifically seeking access to coaching and technical experts and looking to build relationships within their sports.
- Connections between the Regional Alliance and provincial/local sport organizations are limited, therefore posing challenges around communication and effective program delivery

## MINIMUM STANDARDS FINDINGS

Stakeholders were unclear as to who is currently responsible for establishing and monitoring minimum standards with coaches. Additionally:

- Only 12 per cent of LSOs reported having strong policies in place to protect coaches.
- Less than one third of coaches report receiving feedback or formal evaluations from their sport organizations.
- 94 per cent of coaches reported feeling confident in providing a safe environment for athletes, a meaningful experience given the age and stage of the athlete and that they can manage an inclusive environment.

## CONCLUSION

While it is clear that those currently coaching within the system value sport, this research has highlighted some areas for consideration within the B.C. sport system.

- Reliance on volunteers is an area that continues to be highlighted as a risk. Organizations should consider this when developing strategies for retention and succession planning. The data suggests that there may be an increasing number of coaches receiving some level of compensation in their roles, which could provide an opportunity to support the development of coaching as a profession.
- There are also opportunities for stronger connections between organizations (PSO-LSO-Regional Alliance) to support the coaches to alleviate confusion within the system and to better utilize resources.

- The safety of individuals from harassment and abuse has emerged as a priority within the sport system. While coaches reported feeling confident in providing a safe environment to athletes, the survey also highlighted the need to address minimum coaching standards and policies to mitigate the risk to organizations and their coaches. There is an opportunity to establish clear roles and responsibilities as it relates to developing and monitoring standards.

viaSport will use this data to inform future strategies related to coach development and encourage other organizations to do the same.