



# The Status of Coaching and Coach Education in BC

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**viaSPORT**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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# Introduction

In the spring of 2018, viaSport BC. began the process of initiating a research project that investigated the current state of coaching in British Columbia (BC), which would inform the development of a strategy for viaSport. Therefore, the purpose of this research was:

*“The purpose of this research was to gain a holistic understanding of the landscape of coaching in BC as it pertains to coach’s recruitment, retention, training and education, and coaching standards through consultations with six different stakeholder groups.”*

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## Research Questions:

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1. *What are the enablers and challenges in recruiting coaches in BC?*
2. *What are the enablers and challenges in retaining coaches in BC?*
3. *What are the enablers and challenges associated with coaching education and training in BC?*
4. *What are the enablers and challenges around coaching minimum standards in BC?*

# Methods

For this research, quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed simultaneously, which is a process referred to as sequential mixed methods (Creswell, 1993). Data was collected from several sources that allowed for the best visibility into systemic challenges that may be inhibiting coach development in the province, while also exploring the enablers for coach development success. To ensure a variety of perspectives and viewpoints were considered, data was collected from six stakeholder groups (i.e., coaches, Local Sport Organizations [LSOs], Coach Developers, Provincial Sport Organizations [PSOs], Regional Alliance Centres, and the Coach's Advisory Group) using either surveys or interviews.

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## Survey

A survey was used to collect the data on the stakeholder groups: coaches, Coach Developers, and LSOs representatives. These survey stakeholders' groups were selected to participate in the study due to the large population in which they represent. The sample population was recruited through viaSport channels that was dedicated to this research, individually emailing each of the PSOs, directly emailing LSOs, and asking interview participants to disseminate the information on behalf of the researcher to their contacts. All potential participants were provided with an email link to SurveyMonkey, an online survey collection tool.

Three surveys were developed for each stakeholder group. The survey questions consisted of Likert scale (e.g., level of importance), yes/no, categorical scales, multiple choice, ranking, and qualitative based questions. In total, the LSO survey consisted of 42 questions, the Coach Developer survey with 25 questions, and the coaches survey with 39 questions. The design of the surveys centred around four key areas: coach recruitment, retention, training and education, and coaching standards. On average, it took the study participants on average between 15-20 minutes to complete. The researcher ensured anonymity for all individuals who chose to participate in the survey, which was voluntary. For completing the survey, coaches had the choice to be entered into a draw for two gift cards.

## Data Analysis

The survey was made available for potential participants from October to December of 2018. In total, there was 142 responses from LSO representatives, 124 responses from Coach Developers, and 543 responses from BC coaches. The statistics that were used consisted of percentages, averages, means, mode, statistical significance, and analyzing qualitative survey responses for re-occurring themes and summarizing those responses. Tables and graphs were generated to demonstrate the central tendency measures, variability, and relative proportions measures. It is important to note that data was analyzed based on specific variables (i.e., gender). When this analysis took place, it was determined that for the vast majority of the questions, there was not a significant difference in the responses. When a significant difference was found, it was noted within the stakeholder group, but if no significant difference was found, there was not additional reference to this analysis within the section.

## Interviews

Simultaneously, interview data was collected with representatives from the Coaching Advisory group, Regional Alliance centres, and PSOs representatives. Specifically, a criteria for recruitment was that the participants had been in their position for a minimum of one year and had background knowledge regarding coaching within their organizations. When this criteria could not be met, interviews were conducted with multiple representatives from the organization. The sample participants represented executive directors, board members, technical directors and coaching directors from the different organizations. Due to the number of PSOs that exist in BC, a systematic approach was used to identifying specific characteristics that are based on sports services (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** A classification of organizations that is based on the way they work with athletes

Type of Sport	Definition	Code
Individual Sport	Individual sports are provided to the communities in which they are geographically located. The focus of this typology is on individual-based competition activities where the individual is competing in events for themselves as well as the organizations they represent. Some examples of individual sports include athletics, gymnastics, swimming, fencing, and wrestling.	IS
Team Sport	Team-based sports that are provided to the communities in which they are geographically located. The focus of this typology is on groups that consisted of two or more individuals that compete against other groups of individuals in competitions and activities. Some examples of team sports include baseball, soccer, hockey, handball, and lacrosse.	TS
Sports for Individuals with Disabilities	Sports for an individual with disabilities provided to the communities in which they are geographically located. Sports where the individual or team participants have a physical or mental disability. Some examples of sports for individuals with disabilities include wheelchair basketball, sledge hockey, Special Olympics, and Paralympic sports.	SD
Other Sport Organizations	Multi-sport organizations that offer unique programs that are associated with sport, but which do not specify a specific sport, they are more programs-based. It is important to note that not all of these types of organizations were able to be contacted for this research.	OS

Furthermore, these types of sports were categorized into large and small based sports. The categorization of sports based on size was determined by examining the membership statistics for the 2016-2017 fiscal year across all sports. Organizations that were considered to be small (S) if an organization had between 180 to 9,550 members. A sport was found to be large (L) if they had over 9,551 members. When merging the two typologies, Table 2 provides the codes that were formed. Since many interview participants have had multiple roles within the sport sector, they often answered questions from multiple perspectives (board member, sport administrator and coach). Participants were permitted to share as they

interpreted as appropriate, and were not limited to the role with which they had been initially recruited, for this research. This happened on four occasions, and during the interview process, the participant was able to speak both the board they represented and the PSO.

**Table 2.** Typologies created from sports characteristics and size of the sport

Typology	Estimated Number of Interviews with PSOs	Actual Number of Interviews with PSOs
<b>TS L</b>	2	3
<b>TS S</b>	2	2
<b>IS L</b>	2	1
<b>IS S</b>	2	2
<b>SD L</b>	2	1
<b>SD S</b>	2	2
<b>OS</b>	2	4

Additionally, eight Regional Alliance centre representatives were asked to participate in the study, and seven agreed, while all six Coach Advisory Group members participated in the study. Eleven PSOs based on the typology above were in the data collection process. In total, 24 interviews were conducted between the different actors associated with coaching in the province of BC. Semi-structured interviews were conducted through the phone call, and all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. During the interview process, 16 open-ended questions were asked of the Coach’s Advisory Group, 30 open-ended questions were asked of the PSO representatives, and 24 open-ended questions were asked of the Regional Alliance representatives. Interviews lasted between 40 to 60 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were collected until a point is reached where no new information is being presented, which is referred to as the data saturation point (Kumar, 2014). Initially, 27 interviews were posed for this research. After completing 24 interviews no new data were present, as the interview process had reached data saturation. Interview data were transcribed and then reviewed and analyzed. There were over 600 pages of transcribed interviews produced. The analysis consisted of employing a five-stage analytic process, originating with Edwards and Skinner (2009), and Miles & Huberman (1994). This is the five stages of analysis are: *familiarization, thematic framework, indexing, charting, and interpretation.*

# Current State Analysis: Research Findings by Stakeholder

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## Stakeholder: Coaches

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### Demographic Info:

Of the 543 coach survey participants who responded, 323 identified as male, 217 female, and 3 participants preferred not to say. The median age of the survey participants was between 41-45, while the median household income level was between \$100,000 to \$120,000 before taxes. Coaches indicated that their home communities were primarily classified as major urban cities (42%). The highest response rate for the geographic region was Metro Vancouver (36%), which was followed by Fraser Valley (19%) and Vancouver Island South (11%). Furthermore, survey participants represented 39 different sports, where lacrosse ( $n=109$ ), soccer ( $n=100$ ), and hockey ( $n=89$ ) were the highest number of respondents from each sport. Participants were permitted to provide multiple answers to questions, and had several opportunities to provide detailed information.

### Recruitment Major Findings:

The vast majority of the coaches were found to be a volunteer (62%), while the remaining coaches were either paid (21%) or indicated they were both paid and volunteers (17%).

Three questions were posed that pertain to the recruitment of coaches. The areas that were addressed include:

- The rationale for starting to coach
- How the coaches heard about the coaching opportunity
- What was positive regarding their introduction to coaching.

Based on the survey data, the main reason for starting to coach was to give back to the sport (75%), which was followed by a general interest in sport (66%) and their children participate in the sport or other family reasons (52%). Also, 48 coaches responded with a qualitative response regarding the rationale for coaching: former player/athlete (33%), shortage of coaches (19%), and passion for the sport (25%).

Most coaches found their opportunity to coach through previous involvement as an athlete (36%), being a parent of an athlete whose team needed a coach (27%), and being sought out by the organization to coach (18%). The final area related to the recruitment of coaches was the positive aspects in their introduction to coaching. The responses were as follows:

- Welcoming culture (51%)
- Achievable training or requirements (39%)
- A clear understanding of responsibilities (37%)
- Easy access to experts or resources (17%)
- None (15%)

Some of the other qualitative responses include:

- Athlete development
- Enjoyment from the kids that enable them to be active
- Positive feedback
- Working with the athletes

### **Retention Major Findings:**

Six questions were asked related to coach retention. Some of the areas that were covered included:

- Professional development,
- The rewarding aspects of being a coach, motivations,
- The challenges faced being an effective coach,
- Providing meaningful opportunities to coach

Professional development opportunities were suggested to be a mechanism for retaining coaches. The two primary opportunities that the coach participants indicated that were available to them were: In-service training/coach meetings (32%); and, technical updates or upgrading (additional to the NCCP) (30%). Whereas, thirty-four percent of the coach participants were unsure of professional development opportunities.

Conducive with the responses about the recruitment of coaches, the most rewarding aspect of coaching was found to be athlete development (93%), which was followed by social interaction (73%).

The motivating factors for continuing to coach were:

- A love of the sport (85%)
- Athlete development (79%)
- A desire to be involved in the sports community (66%)

However, the most frequently selected challenge with regards to coaching was: Sports Politics (51%), which was followed by Time Commitment (39%), Lack of Organizational Support (36%), and Lack of Professional Development Opportunities (30%). Some of the coach participants chose to respond through the open-ended portion of this question, and 13% (out of 81 who responded this way to the question) identified parents as a challenge.

When the question was posed: Do you feel like meaningful opportunities exist for you to progress in coaching? The response was:

- 47% of coaches felt there were opportunities to progress
- 29% of coaches were unsure of any opportunities to progress
- 23% of coaches indicated that there was not an opportunity to progress

Further analysis of the above question, where the question was analyzed based on gender, the results revealed that 48% ( $n=125$ ) of males indicated that there were opportunities for advancement in coaching, where 25% ( $n=65$ ) did not believe that they could progress, and 27% ( $n=70$ ) were unsure.

Similar responses were found for the female coaches: 47% ( $n=84$ ) said yes to having opportunities, 21% ( $n=37$ ) said no to having opportunities, and 41% ( $n=177$ ) were unsure. Three responses expressly indicated that gender was a challenge that they faced in coaching, for example: *“Being a woman in a predominantly male-dominated sport and position.”*

The coaching participants indicated that some of the factors that organizations should consider keeping them motivated to continue to coach were:

- Support of day-to-day coaching challenges (i.e., parents)
- Additional learning opportunities (e.g., NCCP or professional development)
- Greater recognition
- Mentorship opportunities
- Financial incentives
- Better communication between all actors within the coaching system
- Increase the number of professional development opportunities for coaches

Coaching recognition was rated as neutral in a Likert based question. The study participants indicated that on average they rate communication from the primary organization as a two out of five (1=terrible to 5=excellent). The most preferred choice of communication is email (92%), which was followed by Newsletter (32%), Texting (28%), Phone (25%), Social Media (24%), and an App (23%).

The largest provider of resources for coaches was found to be provincial sport organizations (64%), where the remaining resources came from local sport organizations (59%), national sport organizations (21%). And Regional Alliance centres (12%). Other sources of resources that were indicated by the survey participants from various qualitative responses included the internet (12%), schools (7%), and professional unions (5%). Additional types of resource support were identified as coaching clinics, mentoring, lesson plans, workshops, facilities, financial support, professional development, insurance, and online training exercises.

### **Training and Education Major Findings:**

Eight questions were posed about the training and education of coaches. The following areas comprised the questions: the importance of coach education, the NCCP, funding support of NCCP modules, challenges to NCCP training, and mentorship. Of the coaches that were sampled, coaches indicated that they held NCCP qualifications at the following levels:

- Community level (55%)
- Competition introduction (54%)
- Competition development (43%).

Based on the data analysis, the importance of coach education for coaches was found to be primarily important (36%) to very important (54%). PSOs were the primary source for coaches receiving their NCCP education (67%), where the other sources were LSOs (37%), Regional Alliance centres (10%), and NSOs (38%). Coaches found that on average that their coaching education experience was rated as fair, along with the accessibility of coaching resources. When the question was asked if a coach's

primary organization paid for their NCCP course, 45% reported that their organization paid for the entire course, 23% paid for some of it, and 33% did not pay for any of it.

The challenge associated with NCCP training experiences were primarily identified as the frequency of availability (63%), time commitment (52%), travel costs for attending the course (36%), and the cost of the training (32%).

When the coach participants were asked about mentorship, 33% responded with having formal opportunities, while 45% stated that there were no formal opportunities for mentorship and 22% were unsure. The critical aspects of mentorship were found to be:

- Access to coaching experts (80%)
- Access to technical sports experts (68%)
- Relationship building within the sport (65%)
- Opportunity to coach at a more advanced level of competition (45%)

### **Minimum Standards Major Findings:**

Of the coaches that were surveyed, 29% stated that organizations provide feedback and formal coaching evaluations. However, 53% survey participants indicated that there was nothing in place in regards to coaching evaluation and 18% participants were unsure. Coaches that received evaluations indicated that those evaluations were done infrequently (57%), while regular feedback was found to be provided to 27% of the coach participants. Fifty-six percent of the participants believed that the evaluation was effective, while 15% did not believe the evaluation was effective, and 29% were unsure. Those that believe that the evaluation was not sufficient, provided some rationale that included:

- Evaluation is not applicable for the age group that was being coached
- The low response rate for the survey that is passed out to the parents
- Feedback was not provided to the coach

The final question that was asked related to minimum standards was: Which of the following areas do you feel you are equipped as a coach to create for all participants? The responses were as follows:

- Safe environment (94%)
- Meaningful experience (age and stage appropriate) (94%)
- Inclusive environment (89%)
- None of the above (0.5%)
- Unsure (2%)

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## Stakeholder: LSOs

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### Demographic Info:

Those LSO representatives that completed the survey identified as 41% ( $n=58$ ) male, 57% ( $n=81$ ) female, and 2% ( $n=3$ ) preferred not to say. The position of the participants within their organization presidents (23%), coaches (18%), board members (7%), executive directors (7%), vice president (4%), program coordinator (4%), team managers (3%), assistant coaches (2%), and treasurer (1%). Of those LSOs who completed the survey, 29 sports were represented. 61% of which have paid employees, and 39% do not have paid employees within their organization.

A qualitative question was posed to the LSOs representatives about the number of coaches that found within their LSO, which 109 participants responded. There was a range of responses that included as low as 2 to over 1000. The average number of coaches found per LSO was 100. When the question was posed: Does your organization have someone responsible for overseeing coaches in your organization (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, training, supporting)?; 81% of the participants indicated that they do have someone responsible individually for coaching, while 14% said that they did not, and 5% were unsure if they had someone overseeing coaching within their organization.

### Recruitment Major Findings:

Within the LSO survey, eight questions were asked about the recruitment of coaches. Based on the LSO survey data, 12% ( $n=13$ ) of participants indicated that it was easy to recruit coaches, while 75% ( $n=81$ ) stated that it was not easy to recruit coaches, 13% ( $n=14$ ) were unsure about how easy it was to recruit coaches. Former athletes and parents were indicated as most common to coach. This was followed by university students, high school students, board member associates, and friends of members of the organization.

The top three qualifications that LSOs look for in coaches were: 1) willingness to learn (90%); 2) available to meet the time commitments (87%); and, knowledge of the sport (86%). Fifty percent of the LSO participants indicated that there were not many resources in place for recruiting coaches. Some of the recruitment strategies that are used to recruit coaches by LSOs consisted of:

- Direct emailing all potential coaches
- Waiving registration costs for the coach's child
- Contacting previous athletes in the sport
- Focusing on university/college athletes for potential coaches
- Word of mouth advertising
- Using the registration form to identify potential coaches
- Paying the coaches
- Posting on job boards/job banks
- Using individuals social media network (i.e., sharing Facebook posts)
- Free coaching courses

Based on the LSO survey data, 54% of participants indicated that their organization considered diversity when recruiting coaches, while 26% said it was not, and 20% were unsure. When the LSO participants were posed the question about recruiting from diverse populations for their organization, there were several different responses. Several examples of different responses include:

*"We have female coaches for our girls' programs."*

*"We struggle to get enough coaches so have not focused on underrepresented populations."*

*"Have a strong connection with ISPARC and the cadet program."*

*"When looking for coaches, we brainstorm potential candidates and prioritize our approaching them based on ability and diversity...from two equal candidates we would approach the one that would improve diversity first."*

*"We work to recruit within our partners such as the Indigenous population, disability sports groups and CAAWS, (locally, provincially and Nationally)."*

### **Retention Major Findings:**

Of those that responded over 50% of LSOs indicated that they did not have any coaching retention strategies in place. Additionally, questions related to coach turnover, and coaching incentives. 61% of LSOs indicated that there was not a high turnover rate with coaches, while 27% stated there was and 12% were unsure what the turnover rate was among coaches. Most of the retention incentives used by LSOs were financially based:

- Waive registration fees for their child
- Financial remuneration (e.g., honorarium or salary)  
*"The "incentive" is if you want your kid to play, you'll need to volunteer. This is true whether it be coaches or any of the other mission-critical roles that are required to run an effective minor sports program."*
- *"Financially we give them as much as possible. Approximately \$2000 for ten weeks of coaching. That would include 20 practices and 20-25 games."*
- Paying for insurance
- Reimbursement for attending competitions

Also, coach appreciation was an outlier that was a popular incentive, as it did not pertain directly to financial incentives.

Communication between the LSOs and the coaches was identified on average to be "good". The most used source of communication was through direct email, while texting came second. This is a different response from that of the coaches who preferred email firstly, but newsletters came second.

### **Training and Education Major Findings:**

Within the LSO survey, five questions were asked that pertain to the training and education of coaches. The areas that were questioned consisted of: challenges regarding coaching education, mentorship, funding coaching education, professional development opportunities. The aggregated data with regards to

how important coach education is for coaches was asked within the LSO survey and was found to be important. It was stated that most of LSOs pay for NCCP coach education (73%) for their coaches. When the question was posed regarding mentorship opportunities, 41% of the LSO participants indicated there were mentorship opportunities in place for coaches, while 35% said that they did not have any mentorship opportunity in place, and 24% were unsure. Some of the practices for mentoring include:

- Pairing novice coaches with experienced coaches
- Providing continual feedback from the organizations head coach
- Creating a forum for sharing best practices among coaches
- *“job shadowing”*
- Formal mentorship program

Some of the challenges associated with coach education as indicated by the LSOs:

- *“Not being able to get coaching clinics before season start. One clinic is held in the Interior, and it's usually after season start. Lack of information available to prospective coaches.”*
- *“We arrange clinics and workshops with quality instructors, and the coaches don't come out.”*
- Lack of coach mentors.
- Limited options for courses in rural areas.
- Lack of interest by coaches to take NCCP courses.
- The cost of the courses to send coaches for the organization.
- *“Very little support from the overarching organization other than the bare minimum for NCCP training and minimum standards. We would love to see more mentorship and sharing of drills, tools, skills, and videos for our coaches. The focus of [PSO] seems to be on correcting poor behaviors rather than coach development. A more collaborative approach would be welcome.”*

Sixty-seven percent of LSOs indicated that they pay for professional development opportunities, and 33% indicated that they do not provide funding for professional development for coaches. The finding revealed that this was an area for most organizations and coaches where they struggled in terms of finding events to attend that provided professional development points for coaches.

LSOs were asked about their interactions with the Regional Alliance. The results were mixed in that some organizations utilize the Regional Alliance centres, while others did not know who they were or used them at all (see Table 3). The Regional Alliance participants indicated they often interact with LSOs located in their region, but sometimes that can be limited as it is dependent upon whether or not the NCCP was being delivered for sport-specific content or multi-sport. Overall, 50% ( $n=55$ ) of LSO participants indicated that they are “never” in contact with the Regional Alliance centres.

**Table 3.** The percentage of times that LSOs are in contact with Regional Sport Alliance centres by region.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
<b>Vancouver Island South</b> (n=11)	55%	9%	9%	9%	18%
<b>Vancouver Island North</b> (n=5)	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Fraser Valley</b> (n=17)	59%	12%	6%	6%	18%
<b>Metro Vancouver</b> (n=38)	37%	24%	5%	11%	24%
<b>Sea to Sky</b> (n=1)	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
<b>Okanagan</b> (n=9)	78%	11%	0%	11%	0%
<b>Interior BC</b> (n=13)	38%	0%	15%	23%	23%
<b>Columbia Basin</b> (n=4)	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%
<b>North BC</b> (n=7)	71%	0%	0%	14%	14%

### **Minimum Standards Major Findings:**

Two areas related to coaching minimum standards that were addressed in the LSO survey were: how are coaching standards established and are their policies in place for mitigating the risk for coaches. When the question was posed to the LSO participants: Does your PSO have coaching standards that you must adhere too?; 60% indicated that PSOs do have coaching standards, while 8% do not, and 33% were not sure. In the case where coaching standards are set by the PSOs, 87% of the LSO survey participants indicated that they could meet the requirements and 13% are not able to meet them.

LSO participants were asked to respond to their organization having any formal policies about mitigating risk for coaches. The following results are below:

- No (37%)
- Yes, but they could be stronger (27%)
- Unsure (22%)
- Yes, they are effective (12%)
- Yes, but they are ineffective (3%)

Furthermore, the mechanisms that LSOs mentioned that are put into place to protect coaches consist of:

- Player and parent codes of conduct
- Coaches are obligated to take respect in sport and ethical decision-making courses
- Two-way communication tactics between parents and coaches
- Board involvement
- Liability insurance
- Mentorship
- Criminal record checks

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## Stakeholder: Coach Developers

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### **Coach Developer Survey Demographics:**

Of those Coach Developers who completed the survey, 48% ( $n=60$ ) identified as male, and 51% ( $n=63$ ) female, and 1% ( $n=1$ ) preferred not to say. The Coach Developers consisted of Learning Facilitators (90%), Coach Evaluators (70%), and Master Learning Facilitators (21%). A Coach Developer can have multiple positions and was able to provide all that applied to them. Most of the study participants were involved as a Coach Developer in a sport specific capacity (90%), while 18% were multi-sport Coach Developers with viaSport and 5% were multi-sport with another organization (e.g., ISPARC or Special Olympics).

### **Recruitment Major Findings:**

The Coach Developers response to coaching recruitment focused on the recruitment of Coach Developers rather than coaches. However, they did indicate that the following tools may assist in supporting potential coaches' engagement in coaching positions:

- Financial remuneration for services and training
- More available courses
- Better communication of coaching opportunities
- More support
- Removal of the politics associated with coaching

### **Retention Major Findings:**

Coach Developers did not discuss enablers and challenges associated with coach retention.

### **Training and Education Major Findings:**

The following areas were addressed by the Coach Developer regarding coach education and training:

- The delivery of NCCP programs
- Accessibility of information
- The challenges with the delivery of coach education by the Coach Developers
- Coach Developer mentorship

Coach Developers were asked about being equipped to deliver modules as a way to better understand the coach's experiences with the NCCP. More than 90% of the Coach Developers stated that they were equipped to deliver the NCCP program. However, some of the areas for improvement included: facilities, equipment, and lack of understanding by the PSOs as to the process for coach training and certification.

Coach Developers (98%) indicated that coach information was accessible to very accessible. The challenges that were found to affect the delivery of coach education by Coach Developers were the following: materials are outdated (37%); not enough compensation for time (34%); facility for hosting the modules is not acceptable (19%); and, cancellation of training occurs too often (49%). Beyond the

challenges indicated above, some of the common responses that were identified were: the course material can be challenging to get through in a weekend, not always enough people taking the course, and manuals are too technical.

There are opportunities for Coach Developers to act as mentors as suggested by 71% of the Coach Developers. Twelve percent of Coach Developers indicated that there were no opportunities available, and 17% were unsure.

**Minimum Standards Major Findings:**

Coach Developers were asked about supporting coaches in going from a trained coach to a certified coach. The results of the above question were responded by 52 participants, and some of the responses included:

- Mentorship
- Not encouraged to progress to be a certified coach
- Positive reinforcement about the process
- Make it mandatory at the LSO level

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## Stakeholder: PSOs

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Interviews were conducted with 11 PSOs (see methods section for a description of the PSO participants). Subthemes that are presented below emerged from a minimum of six of the PSOs. The PSOs that participated in the interviews were a combination of multi-sport organizations and sport-specific organizations. As a result, some PSOs (i.e.,  $n=4$ ) that are considered multi-sport organizations felt that they do not have a responsibility to directly recruit, retain, train and educate, and/or establish minimum standards in coaching. However, they are involved in the coaching system and did respond to each of the themes discussed below.

### Recruitment Major Findings:

Similar to that of the other interview stakeholder groups, PSOs indicated they typically leave the recruitment of coaches to the LSOs. Only in the case where PSOs are seeking coaches for Canada Games, provincial teams, and/or the BC games are they involved in hiring and monitoring of coaches. One of the PSO participants indicated that *"We don't really have a set plan every year to help the LSOs with that [i.e., recruitment]"* (PSO 3). This was a similar response as a "hands-off" approach is taken to recruiting coaches for LSOs. In terms of recruiting coaches at the PSO level, nine of the PSO participants indicated that it is not an issue finding coaches for PSO programming.

The subthemes that emerged from the data analysis consisted of:

- Managing coaching recruitment ( $n=11$ )
- Not having enough coaches ( $n=11$ )
- Challenges for recruiting ( $n=9$ )
- Recruiting diverse populations of coaches ( $n=11$ )

In managing coaching recruitment, PSOs explained that for some ( $n=3$ ) they are in direct communication with LSOs and have insight into coach recruitment practices at the LSO level. The three PSO participants who have communication with the LSOs primarily discuss the area of coach education so that they can ensure that the newly recruited coaches can get on the field and/or bench for the LSO. Another aspect that PSOs indicated they do for LSOs was that they would advertise on the provincial website for vacant coaching positions.

The second subtheme that emerged was that at the community level there is a shortage of coaches. For example, *"Getting coaches is an ongoing problem..."* (PSO 10) and *"We quite often have a shortage. It's not easy; nothing is easy. Coaches aren't easy to find. They're not easy to find. We're constantly looking for new coaches in all areas of the province. So no, it's not easy to find coaches"* (PSO 8). Finally, PSO 10 explained that,

*Getting coaches is an ongoing problem and so we have multiple ways of recruitment of volunteers period and we just continue to work all of those different types of recruitment that we have, but it's rare for us to say at any given time in 55 communities around the province we're right, we don't need anyone, I can't ever imagine that happening, there's always transition or there's still a need for more people and we're recruiting more and more athletes on an annual basis so as we recruit more athletes we need more coaches, so it's going to be an ongoing cycle.*

Other challenges that existed for recruiting coaches by PSOs is the time commitment, and cost. For example, *“People are less willing to volunteer their time in general”* (PSO 3).

Diversity in recruiting underrepresented groups as coaches did not emerge naturally through the interview process. Only one PSO indicated that they had a regulation that required one female had to be part of the coaching staff at all levels of competition within the sport. The interview participant suggested that this plays a role in the “forcing” the organizations at both the LSO and PSO level for recruiting diverse populations (i.e., female coaches). The remaining PSOs stated that they did not have a policy regarding the recruitment of coaches from underrepresented groups, and they were looking for anyone to fill the role at the community level. For example, PSO 8 stated, *“We don't have the luxury of being able to be selective; we will take anyone who is interested.”*

### **Retention Major Findings:**

The subthemes that emerged within the context of retention were: finances ( $n=11$ ), family circumstances ( $n=7$ ), recognition ( $n=11$ ), resources ( $n=7$ ), and opportunities for advancement ( $n=9$ ). The subtheme of finances was about paying for the costs of coaching, which can include travel, coach training, and professional development. PSOs suggested that to ensure that coaches remain coaching that they should provide financial incentives for them to remain. However, they also noted that in most cases this would cause an increase in registration fees to cover those coaching related expenses. Notably, some of the PSOs ( $n=3$ ) acknowledged the costs for coaches came from getting the coaching training. PSO 8 described the costs of the NCCP as being a *“money grab,”* which they heard from the coaches within their sport. From a management perspective, when coaches get to a certain level within the sport, they either pay for the training themselves, or the PSO or the LSO cover the cost. The PSO participants believed this as a deterrent for keeping coaches.

A challenge that was recognized in retaining coaches was family circumstances. In this case, the PSO participants discussed the fact that programs relied on volunteers that were typically parents that had been involved or were asked to be involved in their child’s sports program. PSO 7 suggested that for them coaching turnover occurred at the *“younger age divisions”* because at this level the coaches tended to be parent coaches. In having parents as coaches, they tend to remain as long as their child is involved in the sport; thus, the challenge for PSOs and LSOs is to have these coaches remain coaching after their child has left the sport.

The recognition of coaches can be a valuable tool in coach retention as it can indicate the value of the coach to the sport and organization. One organization recognized the coaches by providing a gift, but a concern emerged related to providing the same gift each year and whether or not it will lose its value for the coach. Another PSO said that they try to do as much as possible to recognize the coaches:

*At a provincial level, we try as much as possible to recognize our coaches. We have awards at the end of the year for different community and competitive level coaches each season, and we ask for nominations and recognize them all from the different associations. Moreover, then on top of that, we try and have initiatives throughout the year. We did a contest during National Coaches Week for people to nominate their coaches and tell us what they appreciate about them and picked a random winner out of the people that submitted photos and all of that stuff. I definitely think that recognition and retention is something that we're going to continue to work*

*on, especially with our coaches. But I think a lot of it is done at a local level 'cause they're on the ground hands on with each other all the time. And I think most of our local associations do a really good job of that. (PSO 7)*

Building on coach recognition, resources were identified as a tool to ensure a coach remains as a coach in the sport. These resources can be associated with paying for training (i.e., coaching education), equipment, training opportunities, specialized facilities, and professional development opportunities. Most PSOs indicated that there was a pathway for coaches to progress from one level to another if they choose to advance to another level. For example, “Yes, we don't have a guaranteed pathway to the [Pro Sports] but within our own system if they start as an assistant the logical progression for them to a head coach” (PSO 3).

### **Training and Education Major Findings:**

The PSO interviewees that participated in the study tended to offer sport specific coaching education, as opposed to relying on multi-sport NCCP modules. One subtheme emerged from the data analysis: the availability of courses ( $n=6$ ). The role of the Regional Alliance centres within the BC coaching system was asked explicitly of all the PSO participants. All of the PSOs indicated that they had limited contact with the Regional Alliance participants or in one case the PSO did not even know who they were, stating that their sport has no multi-sport NCCP courses in their coach education pathway. The PSOs did indicate that if there was communication that existed with their sport and the Regional Alliance centres, it was at the LSO level as opposed to the PSO level.

The availability of multi-sport courses was discussed within the context of a challenge that was associated with the training and education of coaches within their sport. Those PSOs that did send coaches to NCCP multi-sport modules indicated that there were times where modules were canceled with little notice, and the available ones would fill up too quickly. In other cases, there are not enough coaches to put on the courses:

*[S]ometimes we have to cancel of course because of low registration and then all of a sudden now we're at a point in the season where we have a coaching course that's full and people are trying to register in it, but there was one that happened earlier in season that we had to cancel. (PSO 7)*

### **Minimum Standards Major Findings:**

When the questions about the minimum standards were discussed with the PSO participants, each participant associated minimum standards with the NCCP. Further discussion revealed two key subthemes: feedback ( $n=11$ ) and mitigating risk for coaches ( $n=7$ ). At the provincial level, all of the PSOs indicated that they provide coaching performance feedback through an evaluation process for all coaches involved in the provincial program, but not at the LSO level. PSOs highlighted a disconnect between them and the LSOs when establishing and maintaining a minimum coaching standard. Four of the PSO participants indicated that this an area of support where they could improve their relationship:

*As of right now for leagues and associations that is something that they are doing individually, whether it's mid- or end-of-season evaluations on the team, the program, the coaches, and all of that. At a provincial level, we do it for our provincial programs. We are identifying that we may*

*need to support our leagues and our clubs more by having a consistent coaching application process as well as an evaluation process as well that our leagues and associations can utilize which would keep things consistent across the board but also provide them with those resources to be able to do that stuff if they don't have them already. (PSO 7)*

In terms of mitigating the risk for coaches, seven of the PSO participants indicated that they had been involved in the Safe Sport program. For example,

*We've just been involved with the SafeSport; we sat on a working group. So, there's a lot of information there that we will be bringing into our policies moving forward and honestly, it just happened, our busy time of the year but yes, it's definitely on the agenda. We do have, just within our codes of conduct and that type of thing making known what coaches should and shouldn't be doing but there is much more work that we want to be doing through SafeSport piece. (PSO 5)*

However, there were eight responses participants indicated that they have tools in place to mitigate the risk for coaches. Some of those tools that were in place to mitigate risk were described as police record checks, policies, procedures, and coaching and parent code of conducts. The PSO participants indicated that in terms of provincial policies and procedures that affect member LSOs about mitigating risks for coaches, it was the responsibility of the member LSOs. For example, LSOs are responsible for making sure that their coaches obtain a police record check, which is not a regulation or policy that is being imposed on the LSO by the PSO. Only in the case when the LSO coach is part of the provincial program does the PSO ensure that they have a police record check.

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## Stakeholder: Regional Alliance Centres

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There were seven Regional Alliance centre representatives interviewed for this project. For this stakeholder group, those subthemes with four or more sources will be presented below.

### **Recruitment Major Findings:**

The Regional Alliance participants ( $n=7$ ) had similar responses to that of other interview participants, where it was felt that coach recruitment was the primary responsibility of the LSOs. Four of the Regional Alliance participants indicated that if an LSO or even a PSO came to them and wanted to advertise, they would promote the coaching opportunity through their website. As one of the Regional Alliance participants explained, *“We definitely we haven’t branched into that sector yet. We did actually just have someone reach out to us from a [sport] LSO and basically along the lines of asking us; they’re having trouble recruiting and maintaining coaches”* (Regional Alliance participant 4). Regional Alliance participants (i.e.,  $n=5$ ) discussed similar situations and explained that they offered recruitment support through advertising on their website or sending out an email to their coaching contacts within region (e.g., coaches that have taken courses previously with the Regional Alliance centres) on behalf of the LSO.

The major subthemes that were identified within the context of recruitment included: managing coach recruitment ( $n=4$ ), not enough coaches ( $n=7$ ), and diversity in recruiting coaching ( $n=7$ ). Managing coaching recruitment had several different elements that included:

- Resource availability
- Recruitment strategies
- Individual's responsibility specifically designated in the organization for recruiting coaches
- Support and partnerships about recruitment strategies

The primary focus in managing coach recruitment was centred around providing resources and finances. As one of the Regional Alliance participants indicated, *“If there’s no money, there’s no point in recruiting coaches”* (Regional Alliance participant 2). Financial resources were indicated to be critical for LSOs to be successful recruiting coaches. As Regional Alliance participant 2 stated, *“We try and encourage clubs to hire coaches and give money for that.”* In the quote by Regional Alliance participant 2, the emphasis on give money for that was in relation to suggesting that LSOs have paid coaches. Regional Alliance participant 2 went on to state, *“If there’s no money, there’s no point in recruiting coaches.”*

The second subtheme that emerged from the data were a lack of coaches. As Regional Alliance participant 2 stipulated, *“It’s tough. We don’t have enough coaches, and we need more for sure.”* The Regional Alliance participants indicated that they do not get approached by LSOs for help in recruiting coaches to offset the challenge of not having enough coaches: *“We always hear about the organizations having trouble with recruiting coaches, but nobody ever asks us for help”* (Regional Alliance participant 4).

The final subtheme to appear was diversity in recruiting coaches from underrepresented populations. It was suggested that the Regional Alliance participants could play a more significant role in the recruitment of underrepresented populations of coaches and can be influential in the recruitment process for these organizations. For example,

*I think a regional alliance member can be helpful is in promoting some of the key concepts, like more women in coaching, gender equality, playing an educational role with respect. But concerning coaching, all those things I think that we can play a role in helping guide the LSOs in particular. I don't think the PSOs need guidance with that because they're dealing directly with viaSport anyway. But we're the ones who have the relationship with the LSOs. So, I do see us being able to play an ongoing sort of resource role for LSOs. (Regional Alliance 5 member)*

### **Retention Major Findings:**

Most of the Regional Alliance participants ( $n=6$ ) found that due to a lack of resources they did not initiate any types of retention strategies. The major findings (i.e., subthemes) related to coach retention that emerged from the Regional Alliance participant stakeholder group were: retention programs ( $n=5$ ), coach recognition ( $n=7$ ), coach resources ( $n=6$ ), and opportunities for progressing in coaching ( $n=4$ ). Retention programs were understood as the different initiatives that organizations have to retain coaches. In the case of the Regional Alliance stakeholders, their contribution for both LSOs and PSOs in this regard was identified as the professional development opportunities that they provide. However, Regional Alliance participant 5 stated,

*We had a woman in coaching luncheon, but it was tough to get people to come out to it. It costs us money, and after a while we thought, well there isn't that level of interest and most LSOs do their own, right. So, I mean part of what, and probably what you're hearing from me is I think we have to be cautious not to duplicate what sports do. I think really the question is how we augment what sports do, but sports drive this, not us, right. Our role is to help facilitate or enhance on behalf of the sports or for the sport but not do their work for them.*

Based on the above quote, the Regional Alliance participants are cautious in not stepping over the boundaries with regards to providing coaching retention programs.

The second subtheme that emerged, which was identified by all of the Regional Alliance participants, was coach recognition initiatives. Coach recognition initiatives were an area that was a specific question asked of the Regional Alliance participants. Retention strategies may involve the following: coaching awards, coaching banquets, and coaching gifts. One Regional Alliance participant indicated that they had coach recognition initiatives, the initiative was in the form of coaching awards. This Regional Alliance participant, however, did indicate that they were re-evaluating this awards program due to lack of resources.

The final subtheme that emerged within the context of coaching retention was opportunities for progressing as a coach. Four of the study participants said that they believed that most LSOs and PSOs that operated within their region provide opportunities for coaches to coach at the level for which they desire.

## **Training and Education Major Findings:**

Training and education were an area of focus by the study participants, as there is a contractual arrangement between viaSport and the Regional Alliance participants to provide a specific number of NCCP modules in a given year. Regional Alliance participant 1 described the agreement between viaSport and themselves as,

*The only requirements that we have through viaSport are to deliver the multi-sport courses but then recognizing that we don't get a large attendance to the courses for whatever reasons, but coaches don't really see the need or interest in them so we've been trying to see what they would like outside of that.*

Furthermore, a challenge that was identified by the Regional Alliance participants in some of their areas was their ability to meet the minimum number required for having coaches attend NCCP courses. This was indicated by four of the seven Regional Alliance participants. As the Regional Alliance participant 4 noted,

*From a funding standpoint, a lot of times we will lose money on a course just to get say five coaches through, where you know technically we should actually run it with nine or 10, but we've made a conscious effort to maybe lose money because we know that we're making money in other program areas that support that cost of those four or five coaches not having to travel to Vancouver. So those are some strategies. It's unfortunate, and I know [our employee] deals with this all the time is the last-minute registrant that drives us crazy because it's like we're sitting there, really on that, teeter-tottering on whether we do cancel it if it's a ridiculous amount, like two coaches you know. And then all of a sudden two days beforehand there are four coaches that register.*

Similarly, Regional Alliance participant 4 explained, “Coaches either need or want these courses. If there are four people we'll host it, we're gonna be out a bit of money, but that's fine. Whatever, we're gonna do it for the coach and that kind of stuff.”

The subtheme that emerged from the data analysis consisted of accessibility ( $n=5$ ), cost ( $n=5$ ), National Coach's Week funding ( $n=5$ ), professional development ( $n=6$ ), and NCCP content specific challenges ( $n=7$ ). Accessibility was about how accessible coach education is for coaches. The Regional Alliance participants explained that typically they wait to hear from LSOs for providing courses:

“We wait to hear from LSOs typically when we need to run a course” (Regional Alliance participant 4). Also, Regional Alliance participant 3 explained,

*Up until a few months ago, we were really delivering on an as needed basis because we were just developing the coaching strategy. But now we're a little way into the strategy, and we don't require minimum numbers to deliver training. We deliver on an as needed basis. As well our strategy moving forward will be to deliver modules in the community on a quarterly basis. That's on the Multi-Sport modules only. So, the struggle for us is getting the Provincial Sport Organizations to have that same mentality to forego the minimum numbers to train quality coaches in the region.*

In other cases, the Regional Alliance participants rely heavily on National Coach's Week and the funding that viaSport provided to put on NCCP modules during that week. National Coach's Week is recognized as a coaching retention strategy; however, the Regional Alliance centres did not discuss this subtheme within that context, but rather within a coaching education and training context. There were two issues that arose related to this funding; first, was an issue of being able to offer free NCCP modules for students where the cost of attending these modules was a barrier for coaches and LSOs. Furthermore, more than 80% of interviewees stated that it was a challenge filling their modules with the minimum amount of students. Thus, the second issue was that without National Coaching Week funding, the Regional Alliance Centres are not able to put on free modules this week, where in the past this was there opportunity to fill up the modules and meet the needs of the LSOs. A complaint that was expressed by five of the study participants was that they were unable to offer NCCP modules this year or that were not able to meet the minimum requirement for the module to be put on. For example, *"We took a bit of hit, we rely on being able to provide free NCCP courses during National Coach's Week but couldn't do that this year because we didn't get the financial support from viaSport"* (Regional Alliance participant 7).

Cost is understood as the price of taking NCCP courses by coaches and/or organizations. The cost was seemingly an issue that the Regional Alliance participants recognized. Regional Alliance participant 2 explained, *"I feel coaches want to get educated if the opportunities are there. It seems the cost can be a barrier sometimes."*

Another subtheme that was identified was NCCP content specific challenges. An example of a quote that was presented with this subtheme was, *"Some of the feedback I've received on some of the NCCP courses is the quality is not there"* (Regional Alliance participant 2). In probing this Regional Alliance participant further, the reference to the quote was that the content that is provided for the NCCP was not practical (i.e., too theoretical) for the coach to apply in their specific coaching context. Similar responses existed for Regional Alliance participants involved in this study. It is important to note that while this is a subtheme that emerged and is beyond the ability of the viaSport to address, as this is an issue with the CAC.

Professional development was discussed in the context of conferences and other opportunities outside the NCCP for coaches to attend and continue to develop as coaches and meet their coaching certification requirements. The responses varied, where three of the Regional Alliance participants indicated that they provide opportunities for coaches, while three of the Regional Alliance participants indicated that they did not have any opportunities. However, for most of the Regional Alliance participants, this was not a formalized process and only occurred when the opportunity presented itself.

### **Minimum Standards Major Findings:**

The Regional Alliance participants recognized that minimum standards are inconsistent and not enforced. When the question was posed to the Regional Alliance participants whether they had a partnership with school sport, there was only one centre where this occurs regularly. Also, what was found with the participants in this particular study was that school sport does not require their coaches to take NCCP modules and as a result, it is not mandated:

*High school coaches don't necessarily care about certification. In a lot of cases schools in British Columbia are quite happy to have a warm body. If you have an interest in volleyball, we want you to coach because the climate between coaches and our provincial governments going back 20 and 25 years has been less than hospitable and so a way to get back at government for not giving a teacher more money is to say screw it, I'm not going to coach anymore. (PSO 1)*

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## Stakeholder: Coach Advisory Group

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All six of viaSport's Coach Advisory Group participants were interviewed. Most of the Coach Advisory Group participants are or were all former or current coaches, sports administrators for organizations in sport, and have been involved with the BC sporting system for an extended period, which enabled them to draw on their experiences in their respective sports. The subthemes that are discussed below within the context of the major themes had three or more sources associated with the subtheme.

### **Recruitment Major Findings:**

The consensus from the Coach's Advisory Group participants was that coaching recruitment was the responsibility of the LSOs. It was indicated by three of the Coach's Advisory Group participants that individuals get into coaching because LSOs were in a position of scarcity, which resulted in someone having to volunteer because the organization needed someone to coach the team, which tended to be a parent. Coach's Advisory Group participant 2 stated that the sport they are involved with attempts to recruit coaches by *"encouraging clubs to hire coaches and give money for that. But it's tough. We don't have enough coaches, and we need more for sure."* This was identified as a challenge as Coach Advisory Group participants had indicated their personal experiences where a coach had not provided quality experiences for the athletes, which in some cases the LSO was simply getting a "warm body" behind the bench to run the program.

Building on the notion that there is a shortage of coaches, it was also found that diversity in recruiting coaches was an issue. It was a consensus by all of the Coach Advisory Group participants: *"I think we don't do a good job of capturing those marginalized groups, new immigrants, all of that, and I think we [administrators, and sport organization board members] need to do a better job of that"* (Coach Advisory Group participant 6).

Four of the study participants suggested that both viaSport and the Coach's Advisory Group could investigate helping and play a more active role in providing recruiting resources for LSOs. Coach's Advisory Group participant 2 indicated that while it is not their responsibility at this point, it can be a potential opportunity to help in recruiting within the system as they have several connections because of their sporting experiences.

### **Retention Major Findings:**

Similar to that of coaching recruitment, the Coach Advisory Group participants noted that coach retention was not a topic of conversation at their meetings. However, through the data analysis the following subthemes were identified to be associated with coaching retention: volunteerism ( $n=3$ ), coaching recognition ( $n=6$ ), and finances ( $n=3$ ). Volunteerism was identified as the volunteer nature of being a coach across all sports. Coach Advisory Group 5 participant stated, *"Because in volunteer engagement most people who are working with not-for-profits, including sport, approach it from a position of scarcity."* In the above quote, Coach Advisory Group participant 5 is referencing a shortage of coaches, and the challenging nature of the system where so many sport programs are reliant on volunteer coaches. Of all the subthemes that appeared, all the Coach's Advisory Group participants indicated that there was a need for organizations at the different levels to be more cognizant for recognizing the contribution of coaches.

The final subtheme that was discussed by the Coach Advisory Group was finance. Coach Advisory Group participant 1 explained that *“I think lots of coaches who leave coaching do so for financial reasons one way or the other either because they are a volunteer and they just do not have the time to put into it anymore or because they're being paid poorly for what they're doing.”* Overall, the Coach's Advisory Group participants relied on their own experiences to discuss coach retention, as evident from the responses that these individuals felt that the group's role was not be involved in coach retention.

### **Training and Education Findings:**

The responses by the Coach Advisory Group participants that pertained to coach's training and education was limited. The area that was commonly discussed was a coach's status in the NCCP and supporting coaches in achieving certified status. Three of the Coach Advisory Group participants recognized coaching certification as a challenge they have had personally experienced. The challenge that the Coach Advisory Group recognized was that coaches were not engaging fully in the NCCP system. However, the challenge that was recognized was at the local levels for coaches and having them complete the certification requirements. The collective interviewees did not offer any suggestions for improvement in this theme.

### **Minimum Standards Findings:**

Minimum standards were identified by the Coach's Advisory Group participants in the context of one subtheme: feedback ( $n=3$ ). The Coach's Advisory Group participants identified viaSport and the NCCP as means for creating the minimum standards within the BC coach system. Some of the participants also recognized organizations such as the BC Games, and Canada Games are a means of ensuring that coaches be certified to coach athletes at these levels as these organizations mandate it. In the case of feedback, three of the six study participants suggested that there need to be more feedback mechanisms for coaching and that mandating coaching standards (i.e., certification) should be an initiative moving forward across all sports.

This particular group operates within the broader sporting community but was found to have limited interaction with the other stakeholder groups. The Coach Advisory Group participants recognized that minimum standards are inconsistent and not enforced. Coach Advisory Group participant 4 described their relationship between club sports and school sports as fractured,

*I think that is a bit fractured in that you have high school and club and provincial organization and a lot of it doesn't work as well together as it probably should, and we're just not getting our coaches certified. So, it's frustrating that they're not doing that.*

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