

Defining the Role of Your Club's Coaching Director

The trend to employ qualified professional coaches to run the coaching programs in youth soccer is certainly encouraging. Every club should seriously consider hiring a Director of Coaching

Benefits of Having a Coaching Director

- Professional guidance regarding player development and program implementation
- Provides a vision through designing and implementing curriculum
- Can impact all players through coaching education
- Clubs will also be able to retain their best players who, in the absence of a qualified coach, are likely to migrate to other clubs that do have paid coaches.

Desired Qualities

- Organizational Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Coaching Ability
- Motivation to Succeed
- Possesses Developmental Oriented Philosophies vs. Result Oriented Philosophies
- Teaching Skills / Communication Skills
- Is he/she in it for the good of the game
- Possess strong practical coaching experience at the youth level.
- Demonstrate ability to relate to and communicate with young players of all levels, from recreational to top select.
- Possess strong practical playing ability at the professional, semi-professional and/or college varsity level.
- Possess strong interpersonal skills with solid written and oral communication skills.
- Possess proven ability to influence adults and articulate concepts to large audiences.
- Possess a USSF or NSCAA National Coaching License
- Committed to working a non-traditional schedule of afternoons, evenings, and weekends
- Have a dynamic personality with innovative ideas and strong motivational skills.

Recommended Duties

- Design a set of coaches selection criteria and hire all the team coaches. Designing a Coach's Code of Conduct. Train and monitor the team coaches and help them plan and implement practice sessions. Design and administer a continuing education program for the team coaches. Conduct coaches clinics. Design manuals for the team coaches. Bring experts such as state, regional, and national staff coaches, to present clinics.
- Bring Referee Instructors to educate the coaches and the parents on the rules of the game.

- Bring in experts in the sports sciences, such as a soccer fitness expert, a medical expert for first aid, a sport psychologist, and a nutritionist, to make presentations and to assist in the overall program design.
- Act as the technical liaison between the club and the State DOC.
- Create a suitable library of books, videos and articles for all the team coaches to access.
- Create long and short-term seasonal plans for the club and provide guidance to team coaches in designing their own team's seasonal plans.
- Design and administer the team tryouts.
- Design the playing format for the in-house recreational programs, specifying the number of players on the field, the duration of games, the number of games, the size of fields, etc.
- Design the training priorities for each age group and level.
- Organize supplementary skill clinics and camps for the players.
- Design a Player Development Manual for the club.
- Identify the most talented players in the club and alert the State Coaches for possible inclusion in State and Regional Teams. Assist in the design of a Code of Conduct for the players and for the parents. Help the club create a policy for team travel that will address logistical, supervision and behavior issues while traveling to tournaments away from home. Assist the club with the technical coaching aspects of a Risk Management Policy. Educate the players and the parents about the playing opportunities beyond the club level, such as the ODP, and encourage the best players to try out for the ODP.
- Design a player evaluation/feedback process that guides the team coaches in how and when to provide feedback to the players.
- Create a college recruiting information program and educate the players and parents on college playing opportunities.
- Assist in the design and implementation a parent education program that would include parent meetings, parent handbooks, handouts, and occasional seminars.
- Report to the Club Board and attend the board meetings.
- Promote the club within the community and help with public relations.
- Represent the club at State, Regional, and National coaching seminars and workshops.
- Encourage ethics among club members and within the entire soccer community

What a Coaching Director Should NOT Be Required To Do

- Dumping too many administrative duties on the DOC is not an efficient way of using his/her expertise
- Any task that can be carried out by a volunteer, that does not require technical expertise, should continue to be assigned to the volunteers
- This is not to suggest that such tasks are beneath the DOC to perform
- The DOC should focus her energy on coaching and player development if a club truly wishes to extract quality work from her and achieve excellence

Should Your Club's Coaching Director Coach A Team?

It's impossible for someone to coach 3 or 4 teams and still have enough time and energy to carry out the normal duties of a club DOC. It would, however, be a good idea for the DOC to coach one team, for a number of reasons:

Experienced coaches never stop learning Coaching a team will help the Director keep his/her finger on the pulse of the most current issues faced while training players and teams True coaches have the desire to be on the field with players

The Director should decide which team to coach, and should coach a different team each season

How Much Authority Should Your Coaching Director Have?

Clubs must remember why they hired a Coaching Director in the first place: TO TAKE

ADVANTAGE OF THEIR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Coaching Director Should Have the final say regarding the following (but not limited to): Hire and fire coaches Set coaching salaries Organize tryout process and have final say on player selection and placement Have the final say on player development issues such as playing up Playing format, training priorities, important club-wide standards and policies

Directors of Coaching who feel restricted in their capacity to perform their duties will lose the motivation to impact the program and just go through the motions, and will eventually quit and go where they feel more appreciated.

Final Thoughts on Hiring a Coaching Director

Do your homework Have guidelines set Check references

HIRING THE WRONG PERSON FOR YOUR COACHING DIRECTOR CAN CAUSE LASTING DAMAGE TO YOUR CLUB