

Coaches and
Coaching



COACHES AND COACHING

This section provides the club with guidance on the employment/deployment of coaches and to understand the options and financial models for doing so. There is also guidance and advice for coaches to professionalise their coaching business.



The Role of the Coach:

In our opinion the coach is an invaluable and integral piece of the club jigsaw, however, for a host of different reasons, many club coaches feel undervalued and not part of the club team. The majority of successful clubs have a fully integrated club coach who plays a key role in attracting new members and keeping existing members involved and engaged in club activities and even assisting with the success in the interclub leagues.

We do however, fully appreciate, that not all coaches conduct themselves and their businesses in a professional manner and occasionally clubs get their fingers burnt which in turn contributes to the club committee keeping the coach at arms length, which further distances the coach from the club committee resulting in a relationship that doesn't work for either party.

There is no doubt, that appointing the right coach is the key to a successful relationship (see coach recruitment guidance) and inviting the coach to be an integral part of the club operation/committee is a sure way of cementing this success by acknowledging the pivotal role that the coach

It's important to generate a friendly, welcoming environment to attract new members and to keep current members coming back.

plays in the success of the club. This can also work in reverse, and although we strongly recommend that the coach is invited to attend all committee meetings, he/she is 'invited' to attend and contribute, however, is still accountable to the committee and should understand that the committee may ask them to leave the meeting when discussing issues directly relating to the coach or coaching issues. The coach as a result has no voting rights on the committee, however, is able to strongly influence the direction of the clubs coaching programme, recruitment and retention of members.

- The committee to meet to discuss the current role and influence of the coach and review the success of the relationship.
- The committee to agree to formally invite the coach onto the committee and clearly outline the basis of doing so and include within their job description (see separate note on 'Writing a job description for a Coach')
- The committee to clearly define targets for the coach that could include the following:
 - No. of juniors on the coaching programme
 - No. of adults on the coaching programme
 - To refer an agreed number of junior/senior members per year
 - Set income targets (linked to member referrals, monthly rental, non member fee payment etc)
 - No. of teams playing interclub
 - No. of schools linked to
 - No. of 'open access' sessions planned and delivered per year and to set an agreed conversion rate to new members from each.

(The above targets should be set **with** the coach or set by the committee and **agreed** by the coach)

- The committee can review, check and challenge the targets at each quarterly committee meeting to ensure the coach is on track and that targets are achieved. The targets for following year can then be set in the fourth quarter of the previous year. The club may wish to produce a three or five year plan, which includes projections for the term, but we would suggest reviewing the targets annually and revising accordingly.

The coach is a key player within the club!



It is imperative that the club and coach work together to present a unified front and to build the clubs membership together whilst finding a way to provide financial rewards for both parties.

Involve the coach in key club decisions and don't forget that the coach is the face of the club!

Models of Deployment:

There are currently many ways in which coaches are employed, deployed, contracted, retained by clubs across the regions. There are also a variety of models adopted across the globe when it comes to appointing coaches, which suggests that there is no right or wrong way of doing so.

What we do need to consider when we are appointing or reviewing an existing coach agreements, is that the coach is running a commercial business at the club and in most cases, the club and its courts are the sole place of work for the coach, without which, they would not be able to conduct their business. That said, many good coaches provide a great deal of time and effort in making the club a success, for which they are not recompensed financially, which, makes a fair and equal trade off in exchange for the use of the club courts.

In the current financial climate, all clubs are having to review their spending and be creative with revenue and income streams. We would therefore recommend that clubs review their current coach agreements and to analyse the following elements:

- The number of hours the coach conducts at the club / for the club
- The number of individual lessons conducted
- The revenue the coach raises for the club each year (through member referrals, rental etc)
- The current financial agreement and terms of use – i.e. does the coach pay a monthly rental fee for the use of the club courts or an agreed hourly fee for the courts used for coaching, including non-member visitors coaching fees etc.

The coach should be a rich source of income for the club both in increased (and retained) membership income but also through running events and secondary spend!

Once this analysis is complete, the club can then decide whether it is happy with the current agreement or whether it feels that as part of the overall coaching agreement review, it would like to generate an income from the coaching activities that take place on the club courts. It is also important at this point that the club ascertains what they would like the role of the coach to be and what they would like in return from the coach. Here are some examples to consider:

Monthly Coach Rental:

This is a very common model in UK and Europe within the more exclusive clubs where the coach's earning potential is relatively limitless.

Given the climate and the fact that tennis is still considered a season sport by many, thus reducing the number of coaching hours in the winter months, we would suggest having a two-tiered rental structure which reduces over the winter months.

The majority of people who run a business have to rent space to operate the business from.

Is tennis coaching any different?

Who contributes most to the wear and tear of the courts?



Suggested cost structure:

Summer / Peak months (October – March) \$400 per month

Winter / off peak months (April – September) \$200 per month

This fee would only apply to the lead/head coach at clubs that run a larger coaching programme and have more than one coach working at the club, however, this would be subject to the additional coach/s being full members of the club and to an agreed 'fair use' policy. Should the number of courts being utilized/requested increase significantly from the stipulated use within the agreement, the fee structure and or the requirement for all coaches to contribute will be reviewed accordingly. The fee along with income and numbers on the coaching programme should be reviewed annually (as suggested above in 'The Role of the Coach') Club's that are looking to encourage greater usage and utilization during the winter months could incentivise coaches to increase the number of coaching sessions by reducing the winter rental to \$100 per month, requesting a nominal fee for the 6 month period, or trialing the first winter period with NO fee, under the proviso that this is reviewed based on the success of the trial.

Value in Kind:

Based on a similar model to the 'Monthly coach rental', clubs that pay the coach to conduct an agreed number of coaching hours on behalf of the club each week, could develop a contra agreement where no money changes hands. For example, a club that requires the coach to conduct six hours of coaching each month as part of the club programme the club could request the coach to deliver these six hours free of charge on behalf of the club, and in return the coach has the agreement to run their coaching business at the club for no additional fee. This may be a preferred method for both club and coach, as it is an easier way of controlling the finances and reducing the admin time with no transactions or raised invoices etc. This method could also save the club a significant amount of money each year, especially if the six hours are delivered to members as a member benefit, with no additional income yet costing the club approximately \$360 per month.

Coaching Court Rental:

Another suggestion, which is based on a simple 'pay for what you use' formula is to agree a coaching court fee and to charge the coach for every coaching court that is used. Therefore, if a coach uses 20 hours of court time each week and pays an agreed (heavily reduced) coaching court rental fee of \$5.00, this returns the same income as the 'Monthly coach rental' model, and may be accepted more readily by coaches who may be able to rationalise the spend more easily than objecting to paying a flat monthly fee for the use of the facility.

These three examples are suggestions on how to further professionalise the relationship the club has with the coach and to generate a legitimate revenue stream for the rental/use of the clubs

facilities, which, if nothing else, should be raised to contribute to the clubs sinking fund/court maintenance fund for the wear and tear of the court surface.

Coaching Programme Financial Management Tool:

This is an Excel worksheet for coaches to use, to help manage the financial element of their business and to manage the viability and profitability of each coaching session they deliver. Although this may appear very basic to many coaches, the newer or less experienced coaches may find this a useful tool to manage and help grow their business whilst accounting for all expenditure and being able to differentiate between turnover and profit.

The coach can often be the only membership recruitment method that a club has so why not reward them for their valuable contribution to the growth of the club?

Coach Incentives:

It is important, that within whichever deployment model you choose for your coach, that they are acknowledged and rewarded for the great work they do in keeping the club alive. In fact, the coach should be a frequent face at the club and often the first person people see upon their arrival, and should be in a very strong position to refer new members. Also if the coach offers coaching opportunities to non-members, this equally strengthens their referral potential.

Guidance notes:

1. Provide the coach with an agreed fee for each new member they introduce to the club.
2. This could apply to both adults and juniors and the fee would be reflected in the proportionate difference of their annual membership fee.
3. The club could offer all new members that are introduced through the coaching programme/coach, a 10% discount.
4. The club should provide the coach with a new member referral form to enable the club membership secretary to identify the coach referral and account for it accordingly.
5. The coach would invoice the club at the end of the fiscal year when the club would cross reference with the referral forms and the fully paid up members.

NB: There is additional guidance on incentives within the 'Modernising Membership Models' section of this resource.

Coaching Programme Additions/Variations:

Many coaches and clubs run a traditional and possibly a one dimensional coaching programme, however, running alternative or non traditional sessions for members and non members alike, will undoubtedly increase the revenue for both club and coach. Here are some suggestions that you may wish to try:

Children's Parties:

Sporty children often like to have sporty parties, and for parents of boys, what better way to entertain your child on their birthday than to host it at the tennis club (with no mess and mayhem at home) and to run the little blighters ragged! In all seriousness, this is a simple yet profitable use of coach time and facilities, with the coach and club agreeing a profit share or facility fee for hosting the party, and for the coach to utilise the time of some of the older junior players at the club to lend a helping hand in exchange for some pocket money. We also believe that children's parties are a great way of cross selling the club, its coaching programme and playing and membership options, as the party may be for an existing member/child of an existing member, but the chances are that many of the attendees and their parents, are not members, and preparing a well designed, uncluttered flier for the party goodie bag is a good selling point for future parties and all club opportunities.

Diversity of the Coaching Offer:

Tennis has a reputation for being a traditional, white middle class sport that is difficult to break into and is deemed to not be very inclusive or accessible sport. This will remain the case unless we market the club and its coaching opportunities to a wider audience and what better way to reach further into the community than to offer dedicated or integrated coaching opportunities for wider groups.

If your facilities are physically accessible, with no steps or stairs or have ramps and lifts to combat them, then running playing/coaching opportunities for wheelchair users is a great way to provide a sporting opportunity for a wider section of the local community. If your facilities are not accessible, there are many other disabled groups that could benefit from a fun playing and coaching environment; people with a learning disability and those with a hearing impairment/deaf being the easiest to integrate. If providing coaching sessions for people with disabilities is a new experience, it may be advisable to run dedicated sessions in the first instance before integrated the more able participants into the mainstream coaching programme (where applicable). In our experience, disabled participants shouldn't be integrated into mainstream coaching sessions, if it is to the detriment of the other participants.

Also, encourage the parents/carers of the disabled participants to assist with the delivery of the sessions, as it could prove quite costly to pay for the amount of individual help and support required to deliver such sessions (depending on the severity of the disability of the participants). It is also advantageous to involve parents and carers as they will know the capability/limitations of the participants and will be able to adapt the activity accordingly to ensure its suitability and to ensure that all those taking part can achieve.

This is simply one way of diversifying your club/programme, but knowing your community and understanding what its needs are, will help you to identify some gaps in provision and allow you to fill them accordingly. This is also another way that you could offer something that your neighbouring clubs aren't.

Coaches can often be very traditional in the type of sessions they run, so encourage them to ask members what they would like from the coach and be creative - offer something to your members that your neighboring clubs don't offer!

Pay and Play Sessions:

Many clubs and coaches already run such sessions but this is a great way to appeal to and attract local people who either don't want to or can't commit to the upfront costs of termly coaching fees or don't want to commit to a 10 or 12 week coaching block as they are unsure whether their children will enjoy it/excel! This is another great recruitment tool.

Defining Pathways:

We believe that many people stop having coaching due to the lack of clarity around progress and progression and parents feel that with such a vast investment in their children's development, they would like to/need to see the defined pathway that their children will take on their tennis journey. There is a big emphasis on 'Performance Player Pathways' and understanding the route to success for the talented players, but this (in our opinion) caters for a tiny percentage of people that enter our sport, and although it is of course essential that the talent pathways are clearly defined, what about the large majority of the children at the club/on the coaching programmes? We would therefore recommend that you develop a 'Participation Pathway', which shows age and stage appropriate progressions for ALL players at the club/on the programme. This is valuable tool for managing player and parent expectations and could alleviate being inundated with calls and emails at the end of the term, when all parents think that 'little Johnny or Sarah should be progressing more quickly than they are'....

The 'Participation Pathway' should also be developed to cater for the adult players on your coaching programme too.

Let's face it, the club and coaching business survives and thrives on the growth of the participation pool, which in turn, feeds the talent pool.

Hooking New Members:

As we have referenced throughout this document, that many people don't join/rejoin tennis clubs because of the perceived ability barrier and the belief that they aren't of a high enough playing standard to fit in. How do we overcome this barrier? What if the coach was to offer individual/groups of new members a free 30 minute 'ability assessment' or a less intimidating 'welcome whack'. This is a great way for new members to meet other new members (assuming there are sufficient numbers at one time to conduct in pairs or groups) and a way of making new members feel comfortable with their ability. To be reassured by the coach of their ability and to be sign posted to the appropriate activities for their standard of play within the club calendar.

This process could also be offered as a pre-joining session which in turn may help convert interest into members.

Running Competition:

Many coaches look upon running competition as a 'loss of income'! In fact, running frequent short format match play events for a variety of abilities and ages at the club is a sure way of not

only increasing local opportunities for your players to complete on a more regular basis, but also for you to reap the financial rewards through entry fees.

If you were to hold a junior event for 8 players over 2 hours, guaranteeing each player 3 or 4 one set/short set matches, with each player paying \$15.00, your income would be comparable to coaching for 2 hours.

This could also be extended to the players at the local clubs to play in too, giving your players the opportunity to play against different players and if you had a good relationship with your neighbouring clubs/coaches, you could rotate the venue amongst each club once a month, alleviating court pressure (where applicable) and allowing you to run an event one week in every four.

Winter Code Combat:

Many clubs across the Auckland and Northern regions indicate a drop in activity over the winter months, and with over 30% of the respondents to our club member's survey stating that they are a member of another club, this implies a potential 30% drop in activity during the winter months. So how do we combat this and introduce more potential participants and/or members to the club during the clubs down time?

If we assume that a number of members play football/soccer or rugby during the winter months, why not contact your nearest clubs (through a member you know) to offer them an alternative training opportunity at the tennis club. You could then introduce a specific Cardio Tennis/Tennis fitness session for the football/rugby teams, which provides them with a fun fitness alternative. This is again a great way of pulling new people through the gates and selling them the benefits of tennis and what the club has to offer. This would work equally well for junior and senior teams, and if you are successful in establishing such a relationship/s, you could work with the club committee to develop an introductory playing/membership offer as an incentive to join.

Assistance:

For any assistance or enquiries on implementing any of the above suggestions please contact your regional development manager.