

SWF Guidance Note: Young Coaches under the age of 18 years.

The following guidance note seeks to provide useful advice for clubs and officials in terms of ensuring young coaches are supported (should they be keen to do so) to take on a coaching role in the game that they love. Below is a list of hints/top tips to help coaches and officials navigate through the challenges and support them, to ensure they are as safe as they can be, and risk mitigated where possible.

Having young people (under the age of 18 years) coach is a unique position in that they are both in a position of power (as all coaches and officials are) but they are also vulnerable in the same way that other young people are.

Having young coaches is an asset and at SWF, we want to encourage clubs to consider developing young coaches rather than viewing this as something to avoid.

The list of actions below is not exhaustive, a lot is common sense, and should be adapted to suit the scenario that clubs are faced with. For younger children and players, it is important that they are supported, and for older teenagers, a balance must be struck between ensuring risk is reduced and privacy maintained.

Some of the advantages that young coaches bring include:

- They bring fresh energy and enthusiasm for the game.
- They can have new ideas and fresh perspectives.
- They can seem more relatable and approachable to players.
- Helps prevent losing young women (and young men) from the game.
- They can help future proof the game.

SWF however want to encourage, support and protect everyone in a coaching environment – the players, the coach and the club and have developed some **Top Tips** for clubs considering (and already supporting) the development of young coaches.

1. Young coaches should not be a Head Coach (and should not be involved in team selection).
2. Young Coaches should not be expected to give feedback to parents and carers (and their contact details should not be made known).
3. Young Coaches should only be in sport related Group Chat with coaches, with the CWPO included in this group chat.
4. Young Coaches are subject to the same safeguards as under18 players re: getting lifts from coaches, social media interactions etc.
5. Young Coaches should not be in a relationship with players they are assisting to coach.
6. The CWPO should make sure that they regularly engage with the Young Coach and check on their welfare.
7. Social media contact between a young coach and players should be determined by when they knew each other.
8. Young Coaches should not be coaching on their own, especially competitive sport.
9. Young Coaches should be supported by a mentor/buddy from within the Club.
10. Young Coaches should be supported to attend the SportsScotland Young Coaches CWPS training.
11. Young coaches should sign the Coaches Code of Conduct

12. Young coaches should complete a PVG (applicable to all those aged over 14 years).

Remember **young coaches who are over the age of 18 years** can also be vulnerable. They can still be seen as peers to some of the players they coach. Given their role, they are however in a position of power regardless of their age.

