

Sports Coach

You run practices, pick the lineup and teach the fundamentals. Most coaching jobs are part time and most coaches have another job.

TYPICAL PAY

\$47,320

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$29k to \$99k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

High schools, colleges, club and travel teams, private academies,...

How you get there

- 1 Play and then help** Grades 9 to 12
Assist with a youth team while you are still in high school. Referee, run a camp, keep a scorebook. Every coach starts unpaid.
- 2 High school diploma** Grade 12
The minimum for almost any paid coaching role, along with being over 18 and passing a background check.
- 3 Bachelor's degree, if you want a school or college job** 4 years
Education, kinesiology, exercise science or sport management. For high school work, a teaching license is the realistic route in, because the coaching stipend is attached to a teaching post.
- 4 Coach certification and safety training** Weeks
A coaching credential through the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations) Learning Center or your sport's national governing body, plus CPR, first aid and concussion courses.
- 5 Assist, then run your own program** 2 to 5 years
Two or three seasons as an assistant is normal before anyone hands you a head coaching job.

Pros and cons

- + Cheap and fast to enter, and you can start while still in school
- + You genuinely change how young people see themselves
- + The survey projects strong growth and plenty of openings
- Most roles are seasonal stipends, not salaries
- Evenings, weekends and long bus rides, in season
- Parents. A real and constant part of the job

Good to know

High school sport is enormous

The National Federation of State High School Associations represents 51 state associations, close to 20,000 schools and more than 12 million participants. That scale is why coaching jobs exist in every to...

College sport is much smaller than it looks

The National Collegiate Athletic Association covers over 1,000 member schools and around half a million student athletes across three divisions. It is big, but it is a fraction of the high school pool, an...

Optional boosts

Strength and conditioning certification. A teaching license. Higher coaching licenses in your sport. Athletic administration.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Coaches and Scouts (27-2022.00)
National Federation of State High School Associations
NFHS Learning Center: coach education
National Collegiate Athletic Association

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/sports-coach>



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