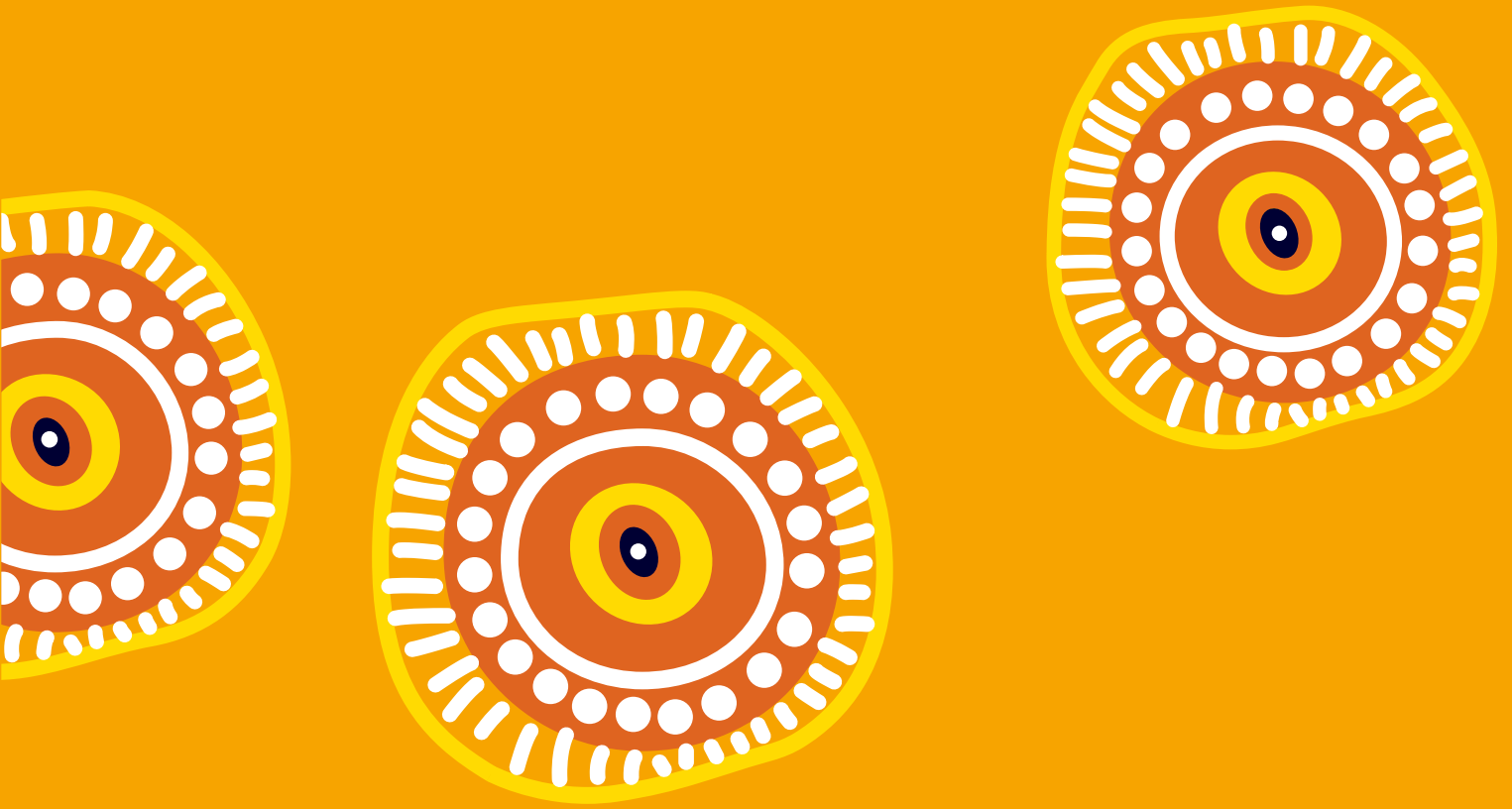




Recruitment Toolkit

Women in High Performance Coaching





Australian Sports Commission Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where its offices are located, the Ngunnawal people and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the people of the Yugambeh Nation and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

The ASC extends this acknowledgment to all the Traditional Custodians of the lands and First Nations Peoples throughout Australia and would like to pay its respects to all Elders past, present and future.

The ASC recognises the outstanding contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to society and sport in Australia and celebrates the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.

Recruitment Toolkit

Objectives

- **Recruit and retain more high quality women in HP coaching roles**
- **Embracing proven inclusive recruitment strategies cultivates a supportive and high performing environment, facilitates the identification of women coaches, helps expand the talent pool, and ensures optimal role appointments.**

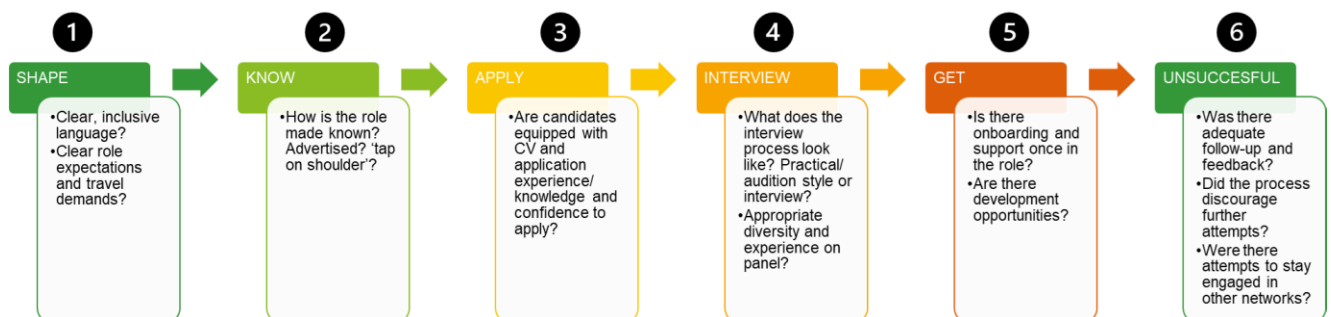
1. About this toolkit

Informed by key insights from the Australian high performance environment, this toolkit provides practical resources and guides aimed at dismantling barriers encountered by female coaches and optimising all facets of the recruitment process.

Key considerations for the recruitment of coaches from the WiHPC project:

- Consider an audition style process that includes practical coaching skills rather than a traditional interview panel.
- Advertise appropriately and ensure transparency around processes, expectations, timeframes to optimise potential talent pool.
- Ensure language is inclusive, including in role advertisements. This extends to highlighting policies or practices in place that might encourage women to apply such as provisions for flexible work, parental leave, and family friendly cultures.
- Consider directly targeting potential candidates and encourage to apply.
- Provide clear feedback to unsuccessful candidates and consider their future potential and how to keep engaged (if appropriate).

2. Understanding the recruitment journey: key points and considerations



3. Implementing best practice, inclusive recruitment strategies: resources, guides, and services

AIS Talent Acquisition Services offer end to end recruitment services to assist organisations in the recruitment process. For further information on recruitment strategy please contact the ASC/AIS Talent and Recruitment team via hprecruitsupport@ausport.gov.au .

AIS Recruitment Toolkit:

- [HP-Coach-Sample-Interview-Questions.pdf](#)
- [HP-Head-Coach-Sample-Interview-Questions.pdf](#)
- [HP-Podium-Coach-Sample-Interview-Questions.pdf](#)
- [Inclusive-Language-Guide.pdf](#)
- [Working-with-Children-Check.pdf](#)

Other sample recruitment documents are on the WiHPC website: [Click here](#)

CPRN

The Career Practitioner Referral Network (CPRN) is an AIS program that provides professional career advice and guidance services. The career practitioners work with high performance athletes and coaches and provide up-to-date knowledge about career development and the impact of the changing world of work. Topics covered are career guidance, career planning, career skill building, resume/LinkedIn support.

The career practitioners have worked with high performance athletes and coaches and provide up-to-date knowledge about career development and the impact of the changing world of work. In addition, there are two AIS career programs run by CPRN; "Advance Your Career Management Program" or "How to Ace an Interview" which can be tailored to support women interested in coaching positions.

- Sports and organisations are encouraged to support women in applying for CPRN and link to the services as part of recruitment communications. Currently categorised athletes, alumni athletes and high performance coaches have access to CPRN.
- **A system recommendation is for the AIS to broaden its access for targeted women to access the CPRN services.** [Career Practitioner Referral Network | Australian Institute of Sport \(ais.gov.au\)](#)



Initiatives for future development

Trained pool for recruitment panel (IN DEVELOPMENT)

Establish a pool of trained individuals for high-performance coach recruitment, enabling independent and capability-based evaluations. This reduces the burden on sports organizations to find diverse and experienced panel members.

Capability framework (IN DEVELOPMENT)

Implementing a system-wide capability framework for recruitment ensures merit-based appointments. It clarifies role expectations, distinguishes potential from experience, and provides a structured assessment process. This framework enhances transparency, prevents unsupported appointments, and supports women's success. It encompasses all roles, identifies transferable skills, broadens the talent pool, enables retention, and facilitates temporary departures for family/personal needs. Tailored technical and tactical sections address sport-specific and coach-specific requirements

4. The collective responsibility of system, sport, and individuals

Opportunities for action and accountability across the recruitment journey for the recruitment and retention of quality WiHPC

	System	Sport	Individual
SHAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability framework (in development) Best practice language guidelines and support (AIS Recruitment Toolkit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear capabilities required for role Have flexibility based on securing best candidates 	
KNOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal networks/mentor programs Advertising – use best practice guidelines (AIS) Talent pool creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise system support/guidelines for advertising Actively support networking/mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage in formal/informal mentoring/networks Seek out talent pool register
APPLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide broad access to professional development and mentor programs Access to career support (CPRN - AIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear process and communications Promote flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access career support Frame skills/experience around capability frameworks Networks/mentoring – active engagement
INTERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Certified'/pool for diverse and experienced (see AIS guidelines for best practice and/or AIS recruitment team support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an interview 'pack' - refer to AIS support e.g., CPRN or resources for interview skills Trained and diverse panel with female coaches from other HP sports Consider a practical 'hands-on process' / audition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively develop competency and confidence for interview processes including negotiation skills
GET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued mentoring and support network Identify transferable skills and alternate roles Family friendly/flexible policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support flexible work, family environment Maternity support Celebrate success and create role models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive engagement in networks and continuous development Showcase successes and embrace role model opportunities if able
UN-SUCCESSFUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link capability to professional development offerings and networks Support creation of a talent pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain a talent pool for other roles or short term roles Provide clear feedback linked to capability and development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive role to maintain engagement, skills

Appendix

Recruitment Insights and Recommendations

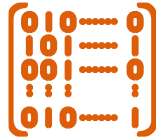
Key Findings from Sector Engagement

The 'enablers': what is having a positive impact



BEST PRACTICE

- HR Involvement
- Diverse Panels
- Clear Communication
- Career Support
- Competitive Pay



CAPABILITY BASED RECRUITMENT

- Clear Role Expectations
- Transparent Interviews
- Identified Skill Gaps



SHOWCASING SUCCESS AND

- Promote Successful Women Coaches
- Demonstrate Flexibility
- Celebrate Male Leave
- Clear Parental Leave Policies



NETWORK

- Formal and informal mentoring
- Shadowing opportunities
- Development programs

Navigating the Recruitment Journey: Identifying Key Blockers and Enablers

1. SHAPE



Blockers

“Environment, culture and pay”

- Unclear job expectations and flexibility options.
- Detailed role requirements can discourage applicants.
- Pay linked to skills and job demands.
- Lack of part-time job flexibility
- physical demands/expectations of roles

2. KNOW



Blockers

“It feels like a game of who you know and who knows you – it’s the same people who get the opportunities regardless of skills or expertise”

- Limited job opening transparency.
- Networking bias restricts talent pool.
- Age limits mentoring opportunities.
- Out-of-system individuals lack connections



Enablers

“Capability based recruiting”

- Use inclusive language in job ads.
- Illustrate flexibility, parental leave, e.g., meeting-free hours, child-friendly workplaces, childcare support.
- Highlight female success stories and flexibility.
- Advertise openness to part-time or job share options.



Enablers

“It’s always about who you know. Greater transparency around roles being advertised would be beneficial”

- HR’s role in recruitment, advertising, and timing.
- Expand networks and mentoring for all ages.
- Widen program access for diverse candidates
- Capability based recruiting”
- Use inclusive language in job ads.
- Illustrate flexibility, parental leave, e.g., meeting-free hours, child-friendly workplaces, childcare support.
- Highlight female success stories and flexibility.
- Advertise openness to part-time or job share options.

3. APPLY



Blockers

“The hours and travel just aren’t family friendly or conducive to me staying in sport or desiring to coach at the higher levels”

- Imposter syndrome and merit-based selection.
- Pay transparency and negotiation discomfort.
- Networking challenges.
- Flexibility perception in roles.
- Environment and culture concerns.

4. INTERVIEW



Blockers

“The only limiter is females generally have less playing and coaching time – this will change over time but right now that’s reality.”

- Overlooked transferable skills.
- Unequal playing/coaching time perception.
- Limited interview formats.
- Gender-related nervousness.
- Lack of diverse panel experience.
- CV and interview skill gaps.
- Non-negotiable pay expectations.
- Athlete reputation challenges.



Enablers

“I’d like an opportunity to shadow and be exposed to international comps for confidence and experience”

- Mentoring and shadowing opportunities.
- Accessible development programs.
- Inclusive advertising language.
- Networking importance.
- Targeted encouragement.
- Female success stories and flexibility examples.
- Transparent pay and hiring.
- External career support mentors.



Enablers

“Confidence. Women not backing themselves in the application or interview or even once in a role. Athletes and other staff are turned off by this and you can quickly lose influence”

- Clearly defined role competencies.
- Utilize success profiles for achievements.
- Confidence through mentoring.
- Valued athletic backgrounds.
- Explore practical interview formats.
- Diverse, HR-involved panels.
- Interview skills support access.
- Standardized interview resources.



5. GET



Blockers

“I’ve actually had my role undermined by females in the organisation. Males providing support and having my back when it comes to expertise and control is so important. Players also need to be on board.”

- Overlooked transferable skills.
- Gender disparities in experience.
- Influence of personal networks.
- Weak CV and interview skills.
- Age-related program exclusions.
- Restricted interview formats.
- Athlete bias favoring males.
- Scarce high-performance roles.



Enablers

“The women’s programs that have been developed through the AIS are fantastic. They have helped me grow and be able to connect with other women. But the males championing change are missing from some of these programs and networks”

- Demonstrable skills in success profile.
- Transparent competency matrix.
- Experience and network through mentoring/shadowing.
- Inclusive programs for all stages.
- Career support for interviews.
- Practical recruitment to showcase skills.
- Clear interview expectations and panel details.
- Visible females in coaching at all levels.

6. UNSUCCESSFUL



Blockers

“I do think that male teams just do not want female coaches as we are seen as inferior. I’m also excluded from locker room talk which the male coaches are included in.”

- Lack of useful feedback discourages candidates.
- Interview selection can sometimes feel tokenistic for diversity.
- Rejections are often about skills, not gender – this must be acknowledged



Enablers

- Provide detailed, skill-based feedback.
- Expand access to support programs

Additional insights

- HP sports challenges impact everyone, including fathers. Can we improve flexibility in work and travel demands?
- Older coaches miss development programs yet offer flexibility in hours and travel.
- Aim for barrier-free coaching, not just equal numbers. Support women who WANT to coach at HP.
- Guilt surrounds flexibility requests despite existing policies.
- Male flexibility use can pave the way for females.
- Merit-based selection is desired, not gender-based quotas.
- Tokenistic appointments harm success.
- Organisations offering flexibility will expand the talent pool.



Supporting research



“While women coaches may follow a linear coaching career path in their early career stages, once they try to progress to high-performance settings their careers are shaped by the metaphor of a maze. Women coaches who reach top-level positions associate their success with casual or external factors, instead of causal explanations related to their own achievements”

Women coaches at top level: Looking back through the maze, Borrueco, Marta; Torregrossa, Miquel; Pallarès, Susana; et al., *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, Vol. 18 Issue 2, (Apr2023).



“While the data may seem complex, it can be distilled and simplified into one key idea: Create a supportive culture where coaches feel cared about, have opportunity to develop competencies, and are given autonomy to run their program and be successful.”

Athletic Administration Best Practices of Recruitment, Hiring and Retention of Female Collegiate Coaches, LaVoi, N.M., Wasend, M.K., Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, University of Minnesota, (July 2018).





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