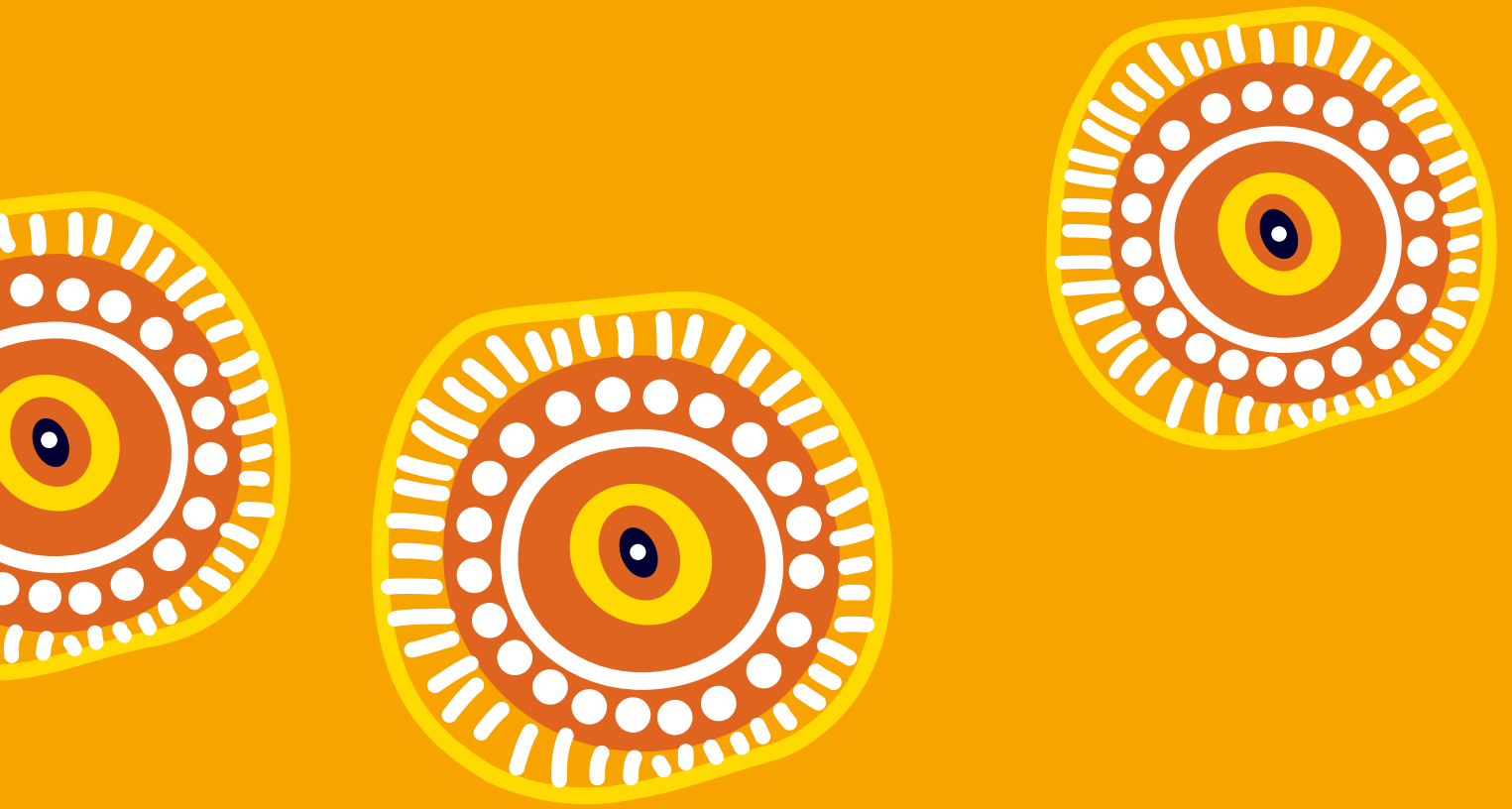




Mentorship Toolkit

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.

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AIS Mentorship Program

In November 2022, the AIS HP Coach Development Team initiated a 12-month mentorship pilot program. This program, involving 11 mentors and 13 mentees, aimed to support the professional growth and development of Australian coaches during key learning phases. Using a user-centered design, the initiative tested logistics and identified areas for improvement, evaluating the feasibility of larger-scale implementation. Insights from the program have informed the creation of this toolkit and the launch of other successful developmental programs.

Objectives

The purpose of this toolkit is to assist organisations and individuals adopt a framework for structured mentorship based on the insights gained from the AIS Mentorship program.

The program had three objectives:

- **Support the development of HP coaches by challenging existing beliefs, providing critical feedback, encouraging reflective practice, and assisting with the interpretation of experiences.**
- **Establish an inquiry-focused, collaborative culture where HP coaches and mentors feel a sense of connection with each other.**
- **Assist with the health and wellbeing of HP coaches by providing them with genuine care and support.**

Insights

Key themes arising from the AIS Mentorship program, include:

- Mentees report significant benefit from mentor support.
- Program resources have proven to be valuable and useful.
- In most cases, face-to-face catchups during the early stages of a relationship enhanced growth and development.
- Participants cultivated partnerships in diverse and unique ways.
- Effective mentorships require significant investment in time and commitment from both parties.
- Shifting from the traditional concept of mentoring (e.g., information transferred by a mentor and passively absorbed by a mentee) to relational-focused mentorships produced reciprocal benefits and results.
- The relationships evolved over time, adjusting, and adapting to the changing needs of both parties.



Benefits

Mentorships can provide numerous personal, professional, and organisational benefits, as can be seen from the examples below.



Mentors

Feelings of fulfillment from helping others and contributing to their development.

Extending and/or strengthening existing networks.

Perceptions of increased self-worth through the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Development of new skills.

A sense of purpose by giving back and contributing to the development of key competencies.



Mentees

Guidance and support from highly respected and experienced professionals.

Leadership development.

Improved self-confidence and increased job satisfaction.

Development of new knowledge and skills.

Increased awareness of different perspectives and approaches.

Creation of new support networks.

Access to confidential sounding boards to test new ideas.



Organisation

Facilitating the growth of future leaders.

Demonstrating a commitment to staff development.

Providing opportunities for continuous learning.

Enhancing organisational knowledge.

Fostering a collaborative and inquiry-focused workplace.

Supporting the development of under-represented population groups.



“My experience as a mentor [with the AIS Mentorship Pilot Program] has provided me with a tremendous opportunity to learn from both my mentees and other mentors. The challenges facing my mentees have caused me to reflect, learn and better understand my own experiences. Experiences encountered and discussed by other mentors have provided me with a better understanding of how I might best support my mentees. Above all, the mentee-mentor relationships have provided me with a sense of satisfaction from the feeling that I have been able to provide some of the support and guidance they have needed.”

Barry Dancer - Former Australian Men's hockey player and 2004 Olympic Games Gold Medal winning Coach.



“The process of working with a mentor led to more confidence in my self-development by challenging myself, being challenged to develop further with critical thinking and curiosity, to keep progressing forward on a coaching journey. It has allowed me the growth that I needed to continue to be better in coaching and more confidence in my role in para sport to support HP development in para pathway athletes and coaches for future sport success.”

Mentee - WiHPC Insights, 2022.

Recommendations

The information below is based on evaluation data generated from the pilot program and is intended to help guide and support the implementation of future programs.



Matching

- When possible, mentors and mentees should complete application processes and be matched by a panel of experienced personnel according to their skills, attributes, and developmental needs.
- Consideration should be given to attracting and matching people from different sports rather than within the same sport.



Training and resources

- There is merit in providing training and resources to mentors and mentees prior to the commencement of programs.
- The above may support the development of interpersonal comfort and enhance opportunities for success.



Support

- Administrative and financial support (if possible) should be available to mentors or mentees who require assistance and/or support.
- For example, financial support was provided to participants in the pilot program to facilitate face-to-face catchups and assist with the building of trustful and respectful relationships.



Connecting and sharing

- Mentors and mentees should have opportunities to connect and share with each other.
- The pilot program, for instance, held informal monthly virtual cafés for group members (mentors and mentees) over a twelve-month period.
- The virtual cafés provided an opportunity for members to share their experiences in non-judgmental and supportive environments and involved the re-shaping, re-producing and re-using of shared information rather than the direct transfer of original material.



AIS Mentorship Guide

One of the objectives of the pilot program was to create a resource that could support the cultivation of highly effective and mutually beneficial mentorships regardless of whether they are created formally or informally. This [information guide](#) has been developed to help with this task and provides a range of program specific and practical guidelines that can be tailored to meet the needs of different relationships.

Links

[Programs | Australian Institute of Sport \(ais.gov.au\)](#)

[AIS launches coach mentorship program | Australian Institute of Sport](#)



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