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Beyond Goodwill: Eight Arguments for Mandatory Foundational Training for Volunteer Coaches

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ABSTRACT

Although volunteer coaches comprise a substantial proportion of the coaching workforce, estimated to exceed 100 million worldwide, many lack formal preparation aligned with contemporary standards of athlete development, safeguarding, and ethical practice. In an increasingly complex and regulated sports environment, reliance on informal and non-formal learning is insufficient to ensure athlete welfare, professional standards, and organizational accountability. By situating volunteer coaching alongside other professions that require standardized preparation and oversight, we address persistent inconsistencies in public protection and professional expectations. Drawing on international evidence and current coaching data, we present eight research-informed arguments in support of a compulsory education framework. Coordinated, government-guided programs and certifications are necessary to reinforce safeguarding structures, elevate professional expectations, and strengthen public trust in sport. In this paper, the mandatory foundational training is presented as a feasible and accessible professional intervention that can reduce preventable harm while enhancing coaching effectiveness.

KEYWORDS

Sport; coaching; coach education; training; certification

Coaches play a fundamental role in providing access to sport participation and delivering sessions that support athlete development. Research has consistently demonstrated that coaches help athletes acquire new skills, enhance sport-specific performance, and foster broader learning and personal growth (Baghurst, 2020; Cassidy et al., 2023). Beyond technical instruction, coaches serve as responsible role models, supporting athlete welfare and ethical behavior (Baghurst, 2023; Pearson et al., 2021; Quick & Baghurst, 2025; Wasend & LaVoi, 2019).

Volunteer coaches, defined as unpaid practitioners, constitute a significant proportion of the coaching workforce (Bales & Petrovic, 2022; Moustakas et al., 2022). The number of coaches worldwide is unknown, but millions serve in paid or volunteer roles. Baghurst and Benham (2020) estimated that more than 50 million youth participate in competitive sports in the United States (U.S.) each year, and well over one billion participate worldwide (Harris, 2024). Accordingly, a conservative estimate puts the number of coaches at more than 100 million

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globally. While total numbers remain unclear, 76% of coaches in Ontario, Canada, are volunteers (McLoughlin, 2024), and 82% of sports organizations in Europe report engaging volunteer coaches (European Observatoire of Sport and Employment, 2019). In the U.S., it is estimated that there are 2.5 million volunteer youth sport coaches, nearly half of whom are parents, and 36% of leagues report a shortage of volunteer coaches (Gitnux, 2025).

Motivations for volunteer coaching vary and include supporting a child's participation in sport, pursuing a hobby, or simply goodwill, whereby the coach wishes to share their expertise or give back to the sport (J. Edwards & Kulczycki, 2021; Leberman & LaVoi, 2011; Ronkainen et al., 2022). In Europe, volunteer-based organizations sustain a culture of altruism and community engagement (Breuer et al., 2015; Hallmann et al., 2025; Moustakas et al., 2022). In the U.S., coaching roles and responsibilities vary by state, reflecting differences in sport governance and expectations for volunteers (e.g., training such as first aid, concussion, and background checks) (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2025; Atkinson et al., 2023).

Because sport organizations rely on volunteers to fill coaching roles, volunteers frequently balance coaching with other occupations (e.g., Hill et al., 2021; Moustakas et al., 2022), and many lack basic coach education necessary to ensure quality coaching, athlete safety, well-being, and ethical standards (Nichols, 2016). Furthermore, volunteer coaches have reported experiencing discrimination due to their volunteer status (SafeSport, 2025). Worryingly, in Ontario, McLoughlin (2024) reported that only 50% of coaches (professional or volunteer) have completed any safe sport training, one in three are not required to complete background checks or sign codes of conduct, and only 58% of coaches are required to complete training before they begin coaching. Similar trends exist in other countries. For example, according to a survey of 62 European National Federations, 30.6% lacked safeguarding processes (Biedre et al., 2024).

Although every U.S. state has enacted legislation addressing sport-related concussions, only 34 states explicitly require coaches to complete concussion education or training. Within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, National Governing Bodies require SafeSport training for adult participants who have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes (Asgari et al., 2025; U.S. Center for SafeSport, 2025). Therefore, significant gaps remain. For example, fewer than 30% of youth coaches are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid, 32% of youth coaches are trained in general safety and injury prevention, only 40% of youth sport coaches can identify a concussion, 15% of leagues do not mandate background checks, only 20% of coaches have received training on how to work with children with physical or cognitive disabilities, and 65% of coaches feel they lack the resources to deal with difficult behavioral issues (Gitnux, 2025). These challenges were highlighted in a recent U.S. Center for SafeSport report (2025, p. 40), in which one coach noted that many coaches were simply checking boxes for their required training: "This reflects what many coaches identified in terms of other coach disengagement with prevention material in tandem with the challenges of relying on volunteer coaches."

However, initiatives have been established to support national federations and Olympic committees in implementing step-by-step safeguarding procedures (Guard, 2026). These initiatives highlight the importance of supporting volunteer coaches, starting from national-level policies to organization-level procedures. Subsequently, the International Olympic Committee has reached a consensus of recommendations on solutions to interpersonal

violence and safeguarding in sport, including a proposal to translate study findings into practice and to incorporate theory-driven research designs to determine effective strategies in sport contexts (Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024).

As a result, national standards for coach education can foster appropriate settings and supportive sports environments in which coaches are equipped with the skills needed to handle multifaceted, challenging situations effectively (J. R. Edwards, 2025). Additionally, free e-learning courses have been developed to offer coaches the skills and knowledge to create inclusive environments and foster positive coaching practices (A Fairer Coaching, 2024). Web-based, open-access courses can enhance flexibility in learning and have the potential to reach a more diverse group of coaches to help them gain basic knowledge of coaching children and young people (Lara-Bercial et al., 2023).

The role of coach education and development

For clarity, we use the terms "coach education" and "training" interchangeably. Research indicates that well-designed education programs can positively influence coaches' behaviors and practices (Siltanen et al., 2025; Stonebridge & Cushion, 2018). Formal training equips coaches with coaching methods, enhances their capacity to meet athletes' needs, and builds an understanding of contemporary coaching standards (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2025; Pill et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2025). Additionally, training enhances coaches' decision-making, establishes standards of practice, and supports coaches in navigating complex coaching contexts (Webb & Leeder, 2022). For novice coaches, formal training is vital for developing basic coaching competence and for providing a structured approach to address multiple societal expectations (Baghurst et al., 2015).

The benefits of implementing systematic coach education and national standards have been recognized in several countries. For example, in Portugal, the authority for coach certification is not assigned to individual sports federations, but to the national sports governmental organization that oversees coach education (Resende et al., 2016). In Belgium, legislation and mandatory standards for collecting data from the coach workforce provide up-to-date information on the impact on the effectiveness of coach education (Ponnet et al., 2021). Countries have developed multiple strategies to professionalize individuals in this field; a more comprehensive example is Brazil, where sports coaches are recognized as a profession and coach education is integrated into university bachelor's degree programs (dos Santos & Hinojosa-Alcalde, 2025).

Conversely, without structured education, coaches may rely excessively on personal experience and biography (i.e., what their coach did or what they did as an athlete), perpetuating traditional, authority-driven coaching practices that prioritize outcomes over athlete-centered approaches (Quick & Baghurst, 2025). Such patterns highlight the need for coach education that integrates evidence-based practices, ethical guidance, and reflective learning (Baghurst & Parish, 2022). Unfortunately, there are too many examples of coaches who accepted the role because "Someone had to do it," "I'd played the sport before," or "My child was on the team."

While not the focal point of this article, it should be noted that the lack of coach training, including the reliance on large numbers of undertrained volunteers, devalues the profession as a whole. Indeed, Quick et al. (2026) suggested that coach developers who work for free contribute to the ongoing underpayment within the coaching profession. Baghurst (2025)

noted that the coaching profession is treated differently from other professions, such as dentistry or accounting, in which experience as a dentist or with numbers does not qualify someone to work on teeth or manage financial accounts. Thus, uniform guidelines and training support coaches in acting accordingly, thereby increasing trust in coaches, who play a fundamental role in providing sports activities that enable engaging and rewarding experiences for athletes.

Considering the limited time volunteer coaches may have to balance daily work, family life, and coaching, online training offers more flexible learning opportunities. Simultaneously, organizations need to implement courses that provide coaches with the specific information they need in the moment, while also increasing awareness of free online resources coaches can use to update their competencies at every turn (Pérez-Camarero et al., 2022). Furthermore, the development process of online content provides coach developers with greater opportunities to learn pedagogical solutions and to develop competence in designing learning outcomes (Lara-Bercial et al., 2023).

Eight arguments for mandatory foundational training for volunteer coaches

The purpose of this article is to focus on volunteer coaching, emphasizing the foundational need for training at the earliest stage of the coaching pathway. Therefore, it contributes to ongoing debates about professionalization in sport coaching and the role of government-led guidelines, certification programs, and registration systems in improving coach competence and accountability (Baghurst, 2025; Lara-Bercial et al., 2023). This article addresses coach education and organizations' responsibilities by synthesizing the literature to support practice-linked approaches.

What follows are eight research-based arguments, presented in no specific order of importance, for mandatory foundational education before engaging in coaching, highlighting both the benefits for athletes and the broader sporting community. Drawing on worldwide practices, they bring academic literature closer to practitioners, enabling research-based knowledge to be applied in everyday life within sports settings. The reasons are summarized in Table 1 and elaborated in the following sections.

Reason one: athlete development and duty of care

Coaches are responsible for the quality of daily activities across teams and programs, including a basic understanding of athlete development and age-appropriate practices. Coaches influence not only athletic performance but also participants' motivation, self-esteem, well-being, and feelings of psychological safety (Şenel et al., 2024). Indeed, volunteer coaches make decisions that affect athletes' development, including training loads, playing time, and interpersonal interactions. Hence, coaches routinely make decisions that directly affect athletes' physical, psychological, and emotional health (Baghurst, 2023; Pearson et al., 2021).

While decisions made during daily training sessions may be indirect in some cases, they are, in fact, highly situation-specific. For example, a volunteer coach of an under-12 soccer team holds significant decision-making authority and responsibility (especially if they are the only coach on the team). Good intentions do not mitigate the risks associated with inadequate knowledge, and the "voluntary" nature of coaching

Table 1. The summary of the eight reasons to establish mandatory training for volunteer coaches.

Reason	Argument
Reason One: Athlete Development and Duty of Care	Volunteer coaches make decisions that affect athletes' development, including training loads, playing time, and interpersonal interactions. Basic education in athlete development and safety yields disproportionate benefits to coaches' daily routines.
Reason Two: Athletic Success	Coaching competence comprises practical tools, drills, and tactical models that contribute to the successful development of athletes' performance. Coach education provides a framework of vital knowledge to improve coaching effectiveness and athletic success.
Reason Three: Power Imbalance and Athlete Vulnerability	Coaching cultures carry expectations about how coaches should use their position to improve athletic outcomes. Education helps scrutinize coaches' power relationships toward athletes and clarify acceptable use of authority.
Reason Four: Ethical Competence and Consistency	Coaches hold responsibility to secure equal practice design, appropriate communication, and safe environments. Training equips coaches with basic skills to make ethical decisions, employ safe practices, and understand the consequences of their decisions.
Reason Five: Awareness of Personal Biases and Fostering Social Inclusion	Coaches need to consider athletes as individuals and ensure inclusive participation. Training helps raise awareness of personal biases and foster more equitable and diverse participation among athletes.
Reason Six: Inconsistency with Standards in Other Professions	Trustworthy organizations have updated guidelines and recommendations to meet contemporary standards in sport. Systematic training equips coaches with skills and competencies that align with the updated recommendations to support both organizations and coaches' liability.
Reason Seven: Cultural Change Within Sport	Multifaceted coaching cultures include contradictory attitudes between informal and formal learning. Embedding coach training as a normative requirement fosters a culture of continuous learning and exploitation of research-based practices.
Reason Eight: Minimal Burden, Substantial Benefit	The costs of foundational training are minimal compared to its benefits for sports culture, where ongoing training improves coaching quality and effectiveness. Training can be organized in multiple ways, and its continuity enables systematic evaluation and content development.

does not inherently reduce its potential to cause negative outcomes, such as maltreatment. Framing coaching as a casual or recreational activity, given its voluntary nature, undermines recognition of its complexity, influence, and potential risks (Taylor et al., 2016).

Without appropriate (compulsory) training, volunteer coaches may (un)intentionally cause harm through unsafe practices, poor communication, or inadequate understanding of athlete development. Requiring training demonstrates due diligence and reasonable care, which are increasingly expected in youth and amateur sport (J. Edwards & Kulczycki, 2021). Addressing a duty of care is comparable to that in other sports professions (e.g., athletic training, strength and conditioning), requiring practitioners to demonstrate baseline competence. Especially those working in physical activity professions should pay attention to current guidance to reduce liability and minimize the risk of litigation (McCoy et al., 2017).

Basic education in safety and athlete development yields disproportionate benefits in recognizing and responding to safety issues. Facilitating coaches' competence in implementing physically safe practices requires collaboration across institutional and organizational work that highlights practical relevance for coaches (Stodter et al., 2026). In addition, formal training can guide coaches on where to find more information about serious safety issues, such as concussions and other health concerns. It can enhance coaches'

understanding of athletes' diverse experiences and ensure they have the competence to handle complex situations with athletes (Everard & Wadey, 2025).

Reason two: athletic success

Coaching comprises practical tools, drills, and tactical models that foster a training culture that contributes to desired outcomes, such as athletic success (Smith et al., 2023). Coaches can draw on their previous athletic experiences to apply effective practices that optimize athlete development and support successful athlete pathways (Williams & MacNamara, 2021). Additionally, coaches use their knowledge to equip athletes to make variable decisions in unpredictable situations during competitions. On the other hand, competition-driven coaching knowledge and a focus on immediate results may overlook both athletes' and coaches' long-term development, which, in turn, can lead to misrecognizing the need for critical reflection, a lack of evidence-based practice, and hinder the development of competence needed at higher levels of sport (Mallett et al., 2016).

Coach education provides a framework of essential knowledge for achieving athletic success. Training has measurable positive effects on both coaching effectiveness and athlete performance indicators, suggesting that well-prepared coaches are better equipped to facilitate optimal development and competitive achievement (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2025). Coach education can positively influence coaches' knowledge, instructional behaviors, and interpersonal skills, thereby moderating the desired effects on athlete outcomes (Wang et al., 2025). Collectively, well-designed coach education programs contribute not only to improved coaching effectiveness but also to measurable indicators of athletic success (Smith et al., 2023). Taken together, these findings indicate that coach education is a valuable mechanism for cultivating and sustaining athlete success.

Reason three: power imbalance and athlete vulnerability

Coaching environments and cultures carry expectations about how coaches should apply their knowledge to support athletes' sport-specific performance. These expectations interact with coaches' personal attitudes toward athlete development, which are shaped by evaluations of athletic outcomes and estimates of potential to succeed in sport. Unfortunately, coaches may (and some often do) use their authority over athletes through disciplinary measures and misuse their position through favoritism, coercion, or inappropriate pressure (Saarinen et al., 2019). Discipline-based coaching styles and traditions can be hard to change within sport culture, since participants may be accustomed to structured training as a shared norm (Mills & Denison, 2018).

Effective coach education can, under the right circumstances, help scrutinize common assumptions about discipline-based coaching styles and traditions. It provides space to discuss coaches' power relationships toward athletes and to clarify understanding of the acceptable use of authority. Additionally, coach training can foster alternative perspectives on the tightly knit athlete–coach relationship as the basis for performance and development in sport (Thue Bjørndal, 2025). Together with individualized approaches, education enhances coaches' competence, context-specific understanding, and support in recognizing unintentionally perpetuated traditions, alleviating inappropriate pressure, and

strengthening mechanisms for redress. Subsequently, training provides a platform for coaches to reflect on their personal experiences and deepen their understanding of the rationale behind practices or drills (Stodter & Cushion, 2019).

Reason four: ethical competence and consistency

Coaches routinely navigate dilemmas involving playing time, selection, communication, and dual relationships (Baghurst & Quick, 2026). Coaches hold multiple responsibilities, including supervising athletes, providing instruction, ensuring welfare, and upholding their own ethical conduct (J. Edwards & Kloos, 2024). This is especially true for those who coach children and adolescents, occupy positions of authority and trust, and regularly engage with individuals who may be physically, emotionally, and socially vulnerable (Aine et al., 2022). Additionally, coaches may promote injustices through poor practice design, inappropriate communication, and unsafe environments. Untrained coaches may lack the framework to recognize their multiple responsibilities and the tools to resolve ethical dilemmas (Barros et al., 2025). This disparity presents a significant risk, even leading to neglect or exploitation in sport in extreme cases.

Appropriate training is a first step in equipping coaches with the skills to make ethical decisions, promote inclusive practices, and understand the consequences of their decisions. At the individual level, training equips current and future coaches with the skills and knowledge required to excel across a broader range of ethical decision-making in sports. These can include training that leverages coaches' understanding of their responsible roles, such as awareness of their roles within health-promoting training cultures (Geidne et al., 2019). Implementing foundational training is one way to connect the organization-level ethical guidelines and safeguarding procedures to daily coaching practices. For example, training can be useful for increasing awareness of boundaries in interrelationships and for offering an ethical framework for reflecting on coaches' behaviors in practice (Heitz & Leach, 2022). Mandatory foundational training can educate volunteers on boundaries, ethical conduct, and athlete rights (Aine et al., 2025). It can make coaches more aware of their decision-making during training sessions and help prevent unethical behavior in practice (Fisher et al., 2024).

Reason five: awareness of personal biases and fostering social inclusion

Volunteer-based systems and coaching contexts exist in a wide variety of social and cultural environments. Diverse exercises, activities, and drills are not delivered in a vacuum; rather, social aspects play a significant role in the socio-cultural, dynamic, and evolving sporting contexts (Wicker & Cunningham, 2023). While coaches intend to develop athletes' sport-specific competence and social inclusion, they may unintentionally employ damaging practices that, unfortunately, facilitate social exclusion. For example, coaches may think they are joking or being funny, but they may not consider athletes' age or the sensitivity of a topic. Thus, coaches need to consider athletes as individuals and ensure inclusive participation. Awareness of how various social categories, such as class, race, gender, sexuality, and ability, can shape athletes' experiences in sports is vital for coaches (Kavoura & Kokkonen, 2021).

Establishing minimum standards for volunteer coaches' training can raise awareness of the diversity of athletes' participation and provide a framework for understanding the intersection of social categories. Training may equip coaches to foster more equitable and inclusive experiences for athletes, regardless of prior experience, background, or social divisions. It promotes a culture in which coaches may become more aware of their biases, encouraging them to recognize the diversity of athletes (Bevan et al., 2026). Further, this encourages critical evaluation of coaching practices that have unintended consequences for participation or the development of athletic performance (Avner et al., 2025).

Reason six: inconsistency with standards in other professions

In some professions (e.g., dentistry, nursing, teaching, or counseling), untrained volunteers are not permitted to work independently with clients due to the potential for physical, psychological, or emotional harm (Strkljevic et al., 2024). These professions involve specialized knowledge, ethical responsibilities, and power differentials that require formal preparation and oversight. Allowing untrained individuals to practice independently in these fields would be considered a significant breach of professional ethics and standards (Zugai, 2023).

Requiring formal training for volunteer sports coaches, therefore, aligns coaching with broader professional norms related to public protection, risk management, and ethical accountability (Bales & Petrovic, 2022). Such requirements recognize coaching as a role of significant responsibility rather than solely as an informal or recreational activity. Therefore, mandatory formal training for volunteer coaches would directly challenge this false notion by emphasizing that responsibility (not remuneration) should determine the standards and extent of training required. In addition to acknowledging coaches' actions, intentions, enthusiasm, and prior sporting experiences, training fosters awareness that facilitates a more meaningful and rational coaching practice (Stonebridge & Cushion, 2018). This viewpoint can contribute to more nuanced expectations for aspects such as competence, accountability, and preparedness, since volunteer coaches often operate in the same environments and fulfill roles nearly identical to those of their paid counterparts. Implementing systematic training, therefore, serves as a mechanism to ensure continuous educational opportunities and to foster a change in which all coaches, regardless of employment status, are equipped to engage in qualified work (dos Santos & Hinojosa-Alcalde, 2025). By establishing minimum training standards, sports organizations can better enhance the quality of coaching practice and reinforce public trust in sports environments.

Reason seven: cultural change within sport

Ignoring the benefits of training can increase tensions between informal and formal learning. These tensions may reinforce the shared understandings that formal coach education is ineffective and detached from daily practices (Stodter & Cushion, 2019). These kinds of attitudes can be more evident in sports with embedded hierarchical structures, such as martial arts, where sport-specific competence is based on the value of the belt system. Potential contradictory attitudes highlight the need for cultural change, in which embedding coach training as a normative requirement (for all) rather than an exceptional demand fosters a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Systematic approaches to normalizing training increase the potential for continued development, where people can discuss expectations and responsibilities in coaching (Pill et al., 2023).

Professionalization promotes organization-level accountability, as having trained coaches builds trust in both their competence in athlete development and in volunteers' commitment to the laws and guidelines that shape sport (Bales & Moustakas, 2022). A shift toward professionalization can improve respect for education while simultaneously developing coaching cultures that respect ongoing coach learning (Quick et al., 2025). For novice coaches, coach education can engage coaches to conceptualize both their current and future coaching practice: education can positively influence coaches' willingness to develop their competencies, increase self-confidence to deliver training skills, and, importantly, enable them to understand the importance of ongoing learning opportunities (Webb & Leeder, 2022). Systematic training helps establish consistent criteria for coaches' skills and an up-to-date understanding of the competencies required to serve as a volunteer coach. Continuous development of education programs can foster standards that align with the latest research findings, recommendations, and best practices to support both sports organizations' and coaches' actions (Dempsey & Cronin, 2026; Siltanen et al., 2025). The foundational training not only benefits coaches participating in the courses but also spreads know-how across the broader sporting environment. However, we acknowledge that not all coaches may want to learn, and not all coaching qualifications are equal (Quick & Baghurst, 2025).

Reason eight: minimal burden, substantial benefit

Increasing demands on organizations and the volunteer coaching workforce may be challenging, particularly when participation is primarily driven by altruism (Hill et al., 2021). Meeting increased guidelines and obligations can feel overwhelming for coaches already balancing multiple responsibilities. Even though actors within sports organizations value coach development and learning, prior training experiences influence attitudes toward mandatory education. In the worst case, coaches have negative experiences with courses that deliver content through lectures, offering only minor opportunities to discuss ideas and practical applications (Wang et al., 2025).

Foundational training can be (at times problematically) proportionate, scalable, and context-specific (e.g., to the sport/situation) rather than overly general and onerous. From an organizational and policy perspective, foundational training represents a "low-threshold" intervention that may yield significant benefits (J. R. Edwards, 2025). The resources required to organize training are minimal compared with the human and organizational costs of preventable harm (Baghurst & Benham, 2020). Setting standards for coaches' competencies can pave the way for ongoing evaluation, learning, and collaboration among coaches, coach educators, and developers (J. Edwards & Kloos, 2024). In practice, training could be delivered face-to-face or online, provided general guidelines for retention and delivery are followed (Baghurst & Quick, 2025). More broadly, organizing courses at various levels can be part of a shift toward innovative course design using multiple platforms and models (Dempsey & Cronin, 2026). In this sense, minimal training serves not only as a protective measure against harm but also as a means of ensuring quality, sustainability, and trust in sport systems

(Quick et al., 2025). Further, having competent coaches increases parents' trust in the organization's ability to organize sports activities in a trustworthy manner (Pill et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Volunteer coaches encounter diverse sport cultures (e.g., clubs, organizations, sports) that are governed by normative expectations for coaches' roles and responsibilities. The core of sports coaching lies in athlete development and social inclusion. However, organizations' policies shape how coaches' continuous learning is supported and whether systematic guidelines for coaches' daily routines are provided.

While various approaches appear to underpin coaches' learning and development, we emphasize the need for formal training for all volunteer coaches. We propose that foundational-level training is an essential part of reciprocal daily coaching practices that can support the continuous development of sport cultures. Additionally, mandatory training could serve as a starting point for broader development across various levels of education, courses, degree structures, study durations, and education standards, which is sorely needed.

The distribution of sports activities, coaching practices, and organizational policies, combined with the step toward professionalization through mandatory training, could pave the way for a more systematic form of sport governmentality. As we have argued, volunteer coaching must include legal and organizational accountability, ethical competence, and responsible decision-making. Further, a focus on achieving structural goals with diverse sport-specific solutions supports adaptation to the dynamics of rapidly changing societies. The relationship between coaches and institutions must continually evolve to meet contemporary standards in sport. Moreover, a rationale for systematic education is that it positions volunteer coaches as a valued force in sport.

The eight recommendations presented in this article offer insights for framing coach training situated in dynamic athlete-coach environments across various contexts. Moreover, they provide a rationale for how and why foundational training could pave the way for more systematic, safe, and competent volunteer coaching. Systematic education enables exploration of up-to-date coaching approaches, discussion of practical ways to increase coaches' competence, and support for continuous learning. Over time, pursuing training signals that coaching is a legitimate, respected, and trustworthy position with defined competencies and responsibilities.

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