



BASEBALL NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

APPRENTICESHIP COACHING PROGRAM

Introduction

The Baseball NL Apprenticeship Coach Program (ACP) is designed to introduce young and emerging coaches to the game through structured, mentored and hands-on learning opportunities. The ACP aims to build coaching capacity across the province while supporting long-term coach development pathways.

The program prioritizes early engagement, mentorship and practical experience, with a focus on creating inclusive and supportive entry points into coaching.

Objectives

- Increase the number of trained and confident coaches within Baseball NL
- Provide meaningful leadership opportunities for youth (ages 15+)
- Support retention of players by transitioning them into coaching roles
- Create mentorship connections between experienced and developing coaches
- Strengthen inclusive coaching pathways, particularly for underrepresented groups

Eligibility

Participants must:

- Be between 15-23 years old (Newcomers to Canada can be age eligible at any age);
- Be registered to coach with a Baseball NL-affiliated association;
- Complete the NCCP Fundamentals of Coaching Baseball Clinic;
- Demonstrate an interest in coaching and leadership development.

Note: No prior coaching experience is required.

Program Structure

Placement

- Coaches cannot coach in the division they are currently eligible to play in
- Apprentices will be assigned to a team within their local association at the discretion of the Association
- Recommended placement: 7U, 9U, 11U, 12U, 13U levels or 14U levels
- Each apprentice will be paired with a Head Coach Mentor by the Association

Role of the Apprentice Coach

- Assist with practice planning and delivery;
- Support skill development;
- Help manage equipment and practice logistics;
- Provide encouragement and positive reinforcement to athletes;
- Gradually take on small leadership responsibilities (i.e. leading warm-ups, drills).

Note: Apprentices are not responsible for overall team management or decision-making, but will be encouraged to grow into these areas over time. Apprentice coaches are not considered on-field coaches during games, nor can they take over this role. Apprentice coaches are only certified to be on the bench during games.

Role of the Mentor Coach

- Provide guidance, feedback and support to the apprentice;
- Model effective coaching behaviours and communication;
- Offer opportunities for the apprentice to lead portions of practices;
- Regular check-ins with the apprentice coach as needed;
- Complete a brief survey at the end of the season.

Evaluation & Recognition

Apprentice coaches will benefit from end of the season feedback from Mentor Coach. Upon completion of the season and after filling in the Apprentice Coach survey, they will be issued a certificate of completion from Baseball NL. Coaches will also receive recognition through Baseball NL communications. Coaches will be eligible to fill their Career 2202 hours through this program if needed.

Pathway Progression

The ACP is intended as an entry point into coaching. After completion, participants are encouraged to take additional NCCP coaching courses, transition into assistant or head coaching roles, continue mentorship relationships and pursue opportunities in our provincial high-performance programs.

Inclusion & Accessibility Considerations

The Apprenticeship Coach Program is intentionally designed to reduce barriers and create meaningful entry points into coaching for individuals who have historically been underrepresented in baseball, including girls and women, Indigenous youth, Newcomers to Canada and participants from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Associations are encouraged to take an active role in recruitment by reaching out beyond traditional player pathways and promoting the program as a safe, welcoming space to learn and grow. Flexibility is key to ensuring accessibility; this may include accommodating varying levels of experience, offer different team placement options, and recognize that apprentices may balance school, work, or other commitments. Mentor coaches play an important role in fostering inclusive environments by modelling respectful communication, encouraging participation, and creating opportunities for apprentices to build confidence at their own pace.

Next Steps

If you are interested in registering for the Baseball NL Apprenticeship Coaching Program, please contact your local association for details on how to register!