



Coach Development Guide | 2026–27 Competitive Season

What We Are Looking For

The purpose of the Coach Mentor Program is to **develop coaches, not grade them**.

Mentors should:

- Reinforce strengths
- Identify the one or two development areas that will have the greatest impact
- Provide practical feedback and support
- Meet coaches where they are in their development journey.

West Ottawa's development philosophy emphasizes developing people as well as basketball players, development over winning, teaching concepts/reads/decisions/actions, psychological safety, high standards, game-transfer learning, small-sided games and maximizing time on task.

This document helps guide you on the types of coaching behaviours we value most and provides you with a short assessment form to share with the coach at the beginning, middle, and end of season.

1. Transformational Coaching & Culture

We are looking for coaches who:

- Build positive, trusting relationships with athletes.
- Make athletes feel **seen, safe and valued**.
- Create an environment where players can make mistakes and learn from them.
- Hold athletes to high standards while helping them reach those standards.
- Model the character, behaviour and values they expect from their players.
- Coach the **whole person**, not simply the basketball player.
- Build a positive, inclusive and team-first environment.
- Put long-term athlete development ahead of short-term results.

Transformational coaching is centred on growth and relationships, trust and connection, learning from mistakes, long-term player development and coaching the whole person.

2. Practice Design & Player Development

We are looking for coaches who:

- Plan practices with clear player-development objectives.
- Design activities that transfer to the game.
- Progress learning appropriately from **on-air to live play and 5v5**.
- Use small-sided games to create more decisions, repetitions and involvement.
- Use constraints and rewards to shape learning and desired behaviours.
- Maximize athlete **time on task** and minimize unnecessary standing and lines.
- Teach age- and stage-appropriate skills.
- Develop global/positionless skills where appropriate.
- Focus on developing players rather than simply preparing the team to win its next game.

These attributes directly reflect LTAD priorities of loading learning, focused teaching, small-sided games, constraints/rewards and game-transfer development.

3. Teaching & Communication

We are looking for coaches who:

- Communicate clearly, positively and concisely.
- Limit teaching to a small number of meaningful points of emphasis.
- Avoid excessive instruction and **“joystick coaching.”**
- Give athletes opportunities to solve problems themselves.
- Use questions to stimulate thinking and understanding.
- Teach **concepts, actions, reads and decisions**, not simply plays.
- Provide feedback that helps athletes become increasingly independent.
- Know when to stop talking and let players play.

Focused communication, limiting excessive feedback, and teaching concepts, actions, reads and decisions are all identified as important development areas.

4. Game Coaching

We are looking for coaches who:

- Allow athletes to play through appropriate mistakes.
- Avoid excessive sideline instruction.
- Recognize what is happening tactically during the game.
- Identify advantages, disadvantages and mismatches.

- Make effective adjustments when needed.
- Use timeouts intentionally.
- Maintain composure and model appropriate behaviour.
- Keep athlete development ahead of short-term winning decisions.

Recognizing mismatches, making adjustments and effectively using timeouts are important in-game coaching skills.

5. Team Leadership

We are looking for coaches who:

- Effectively involve and develop their assistant coaches.
- Communicate clearly with athletes and parents.
- Establish and manage expectations.
- Are organized and prepared.
- Seek feedback and demonstrate a growth mindset.
- Use available West Ottawa and Canada Basketball development resources.
- Build a coaching staff that works together rather than relying entirely on the Head Coach.
- Represent West Ottawa positively.

Coaches should be competent in the areas of athlete/parent expectation management, leveraging assistant coaches and making use of resources such as CoachHoops, PGC Coaching, GamePlan and West Ottawa clinics.

Beginning-of-Season Development Baseline

Coach: _____

Team: _____

Coach Mentor: _____

Date: _____

Rating Guide

1 – Needs Support

This is an important development opportunity and the coach would benefit from active mentoring.

2 – Developing

The coach demonstrates some of the desired behaviours but not yet consistently.

3 – Effective

The coach consistently demonstrates effective practice in this area.

4 – Strength

This is a clear strength and an area the coach could potentially model for others.

Development Area	Rating
Transformational Coaching & Culture	1 2 3 4
Practice Design & Player Development	1 2 3 4
Teaching & Communication	1 2 3 4
Game Coaching	1 2 3 4 / N.O.
Team Leadership	1 2 3 4

N.O. = Not Observed

Strength to Reinforce

What is this coach already doing particularly well that you want them to continue?

Primary Development Priority

What one change or area of growth would have the greatest positive impact on this coach and their athletes?

Secondary Development Priority – Optional

Is there a second area worth focusing on this season?

How Will I Support the Coach?

- ☐ Observe another practice
- ☐ Observe a game / Hudl
- ☐ Model a drill or practice segment
- ☐ Co-plan part of a practice
- ☐ Share a coaching resource
- ☐ Have a coaching conversation
- ☐ Other: _____

Mentor note: Focus on **one or two priorities**, not everything that could potentially improve. This reflects the intended mentoring approach in the Guide.

Mid-Season Progress Check

Coach: _____

Team: _____

Coach Mentor: _____

Date: _____

1. Progress on Primary Development Priority

- ☐ Limited progress
- ☐ Some progress
- ☐ Significant progress
- ☐ Priority largely achieved

Brief evidence/example:

2. What Should the Coach Continue Doing?

What strength or improved behaviour should be reinforced?

3. What Should the Coach Focus on Next?

- ☐ Continue with the existing priority

or

- ☐ Shift/evolve the priority to:

4. How Can I Best Help?

- ☐ Observe another practice
- ☐ Observe a game / Hudl
- ☐ Model a drill or practice segment
- ☐ Co-plan part of a practice

- ☐ Share a coaching resource
- ☐ Have a coaching conversation
- ☐ Other: _____

Mentor Check-In Question

What is one thing you would most like help with during the second half of the season?

Coach response:

End-of-Season Growth Review

Coach: _____

Team: _____

Coach Mentor: _____

Date: _____

End-of-Season Ratings

Development Area	Beginning	End
Transformational Coaching & Culture	___	1 2 3 4
Practice Design & Player Development	___	1 2 3 4
Teaching & Communication	___	1 2 3 4
Game Coaching	___	1 2 3 4
Team Leadership	___	1 2 3 4

Biggest Area of Growth

Where did this coach make the greatest progress this season?

Strength to Continue Building

What should this coach continue leaning into next season?

Most Important Development Opportunity

What is the single most important area for this coach to continue developing?

Recommended Support

- ☐ Continue with Coach Mentor next season
- ☐ NCCP professional development
- ☐ West Ottawa coaching clinic
- ☐ CoachHoops resource
- ☐ PGC Coaching resource
- ☐ Observe another West Ottawa coach
- ☐ Mentor/model practice with another coach
- ☐ Other: _____

Coach Reflection

What have you changed about the way you coach this season, and what impact do you think that change has had on your players?

Mentor Closing Reflection

One thing I would encourage this coach to keep doing:

One thing I would challenge this coach to keep developing:
