

An Examination of Disability-Inclusion in Canada's Coach Education System

Research has shown that coaches are not being effectively educated on how to coach athletes with a disability. The purpose of this research was to examine disability-inclusion within Canada's National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).

Twenty-seven national sport organizations (NSOs) agreed to participate and shared their NCCP materials and resources. Documents were reviewed to assess (a) the amount of NCCP content focused on coaching athletes with a disability, and (b) how disability-specific content fit within the NCCP, and the types of coaching knowledge that were covered.

Only 7% of coach-facing materials included content about coaching athletes with a disability. Disability-inclusive content was structured in many ways, from stand-alone modules to varied degrees of integration within the NCCP pathway. Content focused on coaching athletes with a disability tended to focus on performance aspects (e.g., classification) over participation and inclusion. Relatedly, technical and sport science knowledge tended to be emphasized over interpersonal (e.g., coach-athlete relationships) and intrapersonal (e.g., self-reflection) aspects. Overall, a greater focus on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and disability-specific knowledge is needed. An additional area of improvement for many NSOs would be to provide more background information related to para sport such as who can play (e.g., disability types), the equipment required, and general considerations for accessibility.

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