



Minimum Age for Volunteer Coaches?

This resource stems from a question submitted to the Ask PCA blog. Responses come from our experts including PCA Trainers, who lead live group workshops for coaches, parents, administrators and student-athletes.

“Is there a minimum age requirement you recommend for volunteer Recreational coaches? I coordinate a Recreational program and our current requirement is 18 years old but I have been asked to lower the requirement. I’m inclined not to lower it but I would like to know your experts’ opinion.”

PCA Response by Eric Eisendrath, PCA Lead Trainer

It is not advisable to lower the age for a Head Coach to under 18. In addition to running practices and managing games, coaches are entrusted with the safety of young children, dealing with potentially contentious parents and being the Culture Shaper of their teams. This is a tall order for a minor. Also, assigning minors as coaches may present a less-than-optimal appearance for the Recreation Department.

However, I would encourage you to offer enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed minors the opportunity to serve as assistant coaches. Youth sports organizations often face coaching shortages, and the chance to mentor and cultivate young coaches is a win-win situation for all parties.

Some of these young coaches might have advantages that the older coaches do not, such as the ability to demonstrate on-field skills or relate to youth athletes who are closer to their own age. Pairing a young coach with an older mentor can create the support necessary for both coaches – as well as their players – to succeed.

Let the minor share his or her knowledge of the game, while learning valuable lessons of character development, organization, Culture Shaping and parental relationships from a more experienced guide.

To read more questions and answers like this, or to submit your own question to the Ask PCA blog, visit:

www.positivecoach.org/our-tools/ask-pca

