



**HEAD**

**COACH**

**POSITION**

**EVALUATION**

**How To Employ The Best Swim Coach For Your Club**

**See [www.swimmingcoach.org](http://www.swimmingcoach.org) for More Resources**

By The American Swimming Coaches Association

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# HEAD COACH POSITION EVALUATION

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## **I. WHY YOUR POSITION SHOULD BE EVALUATED**

Coaching Position Evaluations work for all parties involved. The organization doing the employing gets an opportunity to think and rethink what they want, and what they have to offer to a potential employee. The potential employee gets an objective look at what the position and the rewards associated with it have to offer.

It's a chance for both parties to make a good match.

The American Swimming Coaches Association offers the Position Evaluation Program with the idea of serving both parties with education and information. The Goals of the program are simple:

- provide the Employer with a source of education regarding what the coach thinks is important in a coaching position.
- provide the Employer with a way to measure their position with others, to determine attractiveness to a potential employee.
- provide the coach with a measure of information about available jobs, and their relative merits.
- provide both coach and Employer with an objective method for improving positions.

The long term objectives of the program are to improve American Swimming by improving the compensation, stability and effectiveness of American Coaches. The history of the employment of swimming coaches tells us that we have progressed from a part-time volunteer status, to many full-time professionally compensated positions. Presently, many swimming organizations have, or could have, the opportunity for an excellent professional coach to work with their young people. Our long term objective will help educate organizations as to methods and means to employ the very finest of American Swimming Coaches.

## **II. WHAT IS JOB SERVICE?**

There are three aspects to Job Service. First, we publish a Job Service Bulletin two times a month. We list a variety of aquatic positions that are available. Employers pay for advertising opportunities. It is a "passive" service, in that we make the information available, and the employer and prospective employee act on it. We publish on the 15th and the 30th of each month and mail the Bulletin by first class mail to 500 ASCA member subscribers. These subscribers pay an extra fee to receive Job Service making this mailing highly targeted to coaches looking for jobs.

Second, we list available positions and available coaches on our internet site at [www.swimmingcoach.org/jobservice/jobsvc.htm](http://www.swimmingcoach.org/jobservice/jobsvc.htm). These postings are made usually within 48 hours of receiving the information from the employer or coach.

The third aspect is consulting service. We work with employers and coaches everyday on the phone on a wide range of employer-employee relation issues, especially job descriptions and contracts. For a fee we also provide on site, one on one consulting with clubs (Club Assistance Program) and we facilitate long range planning sessions with clubs (VVMOST). Call us for more information at 1-800-356-2722.

The Job Service has been highly successful in filling positions.

When a coach requests further information on one of the jobs listed, after looking at the Position Evaluation, we will review your complete information for them to consider.

Later on in this booklet, we discuss how to best handle the hiring procedure, as well as how to improve the position that you will offer. We have found through working with teams in Job Service, that many programs need other ideas on how to proceed to improve the position they have to offer. We hope the Position Evaluation and this booklet will ease that problem.

### **III. HOW IS A POSITION EVALUATED?**

When an employer wishes to advertise an open position with the Job Service, they follow the procedure below:

Step 1: Contact the ASCA office, ask for Job Service Desk.

Step 2: Explain that you have an opening to list, and ask for the Position Evaluation form. The ASCA office will mail you the form that day, along with a copy of this booklet. Note: The Position Evaluation is required for full time head coach positions of parent run clubs -- clubs where a parent board of directors hires the head coach and the head coach is paid directly by the club. You can also download the booklet and form from our internet site.

Step 3: Complete the information pages, and the evaluation form, and mail them back to the ASCA office. The form is quite simple. This book contains many suggestions on how to upgrade your position and make it more attractive to coaches. We strongly encourage you to email the information if possible to [gedson@swimmingcoach.org](mailto:gedson@swimmingcoach.org).

Step 4: The ASCA will evaluate your position and determine its score in each category. Since the evaluation is self scoring, the employer will be able to know its score before returning the evaluation to ASCA.

Step 5: Your open position is listed in Job Service with Total score, score by each category and your written job description. At any point in the process as you add value to your position, notify us, and we will upgrade the position accordingly.

### **IV. THE EVALUATION FORM**

The Evaluation form consists of the following two sections:

- The Information Section
- and The Evaluation Section

Each section is described and explained below. Please refer to the Information form as you read.

#### ***A. The Information Section***

There is basic information on each position that a coach will want to know to help determine if they are seriously interested in making an application for that position. Providing that information is the purpose of this section. It is not, per se, part of an evaluation, but it is vital information to provide. Below are some explanations of specific sections as needed.

In **Part I** we ask for basic contact information such as who in the club should be contacted, and how,

in regard to this position. Under the club phone, it is a good idea to indicate the best time to call, if such a time exists.

**Part II** asks about demographics. Coaches from another part of the country may not be familiar with your area. This section gives them some basic information. Exact information is not important here, but good “ballpark” numbers are fine.

**Part III** is an explanation of characteristics of your program. We have progressed from the general environment of the club, to the specifics of the club itself. Your reporting of accurate information here is vital. Most of the items are self-explanatory. Number 6 asks if the club hosts meets. Invitational meets are the major age group/senior meets with many teams. Number 7 asks if you have access to the facilities as indicated, in both winter and summer seasons, and how many hours a week you have access to those facilities. If your situation has differed from year to year, please indicate your answers from the past twelve months. Number 9 asks about team travel. Team travel is defined as a team traveling together, by bus or otherwise, to a competition. Number 12 asks for the total figure of your club budget.

Sending any clarifying information with this section is most helpful to the interested coach.

### ***B. The Evaluation***

The Evaluation form itself is divided into three key areas of interest to coaches. They are:

- 1) **Compensation** - basic explanations of what is available to the coach in salary and other forms of compensation. Further in this booklet, we offer suggestions on how you can improve this area with your club.
- 2) **Stability** - this section asks questions relating to the stability of both the program itself, and the status of the coach within the program. This is one of the most sensitive areas in swimming, and one of the most important to the coach. Studies consistently show that success in both competitive and human development terms is best attained in a stable environment.
- 3) **Authority and Responsibility** - this section asks questions relating to how your program expects the coach and the team to relate.

Does the evaluation reflect what you are, or does it reflect what you will offer? Please check the appropriate box.

The Evaluation section is scored and weighted. We have listed and isolated those items that are of greatest concern to the coach, and given them the highest point value. Your available position will be evaluated on its ability to provide these important items. The exact scoring system is explained later.

These three areas are listed, because they are the three critical areas that coaches want to know about when they are considering a new position. Scores will appear for each area, as well as a composite.

Each coach looking at the scores may have a different personal priority. For one coach, compensation may be the most vital item. For another, it may be stability, and for another, authority and responsibility. All coaches will be concerned about each of these, but their personal interests will differ in creating priorities. For that reason, we list all three scores, as well as the composite.

## **V. WHAT DO WE EVALUATE AND WHY?**

### ***A. First, Compensation.***

#### **1. Base Salary**

This is usually the first thing we all think of when we think of compensation, and most coaches consider it to be the most significant. It is heavily weighted in the evaluation, because if it is high enough, all the other possibilities can be done at the option of the coach, on their own. Later, we will describe some options that clubs have used to raise the base salary of their coaches. It is the key item in compensation, and we award a maximum of 30 of a total of 50 points in this section for it.

#### **2. Major Medical Insurance**

Coaches, like most people, need to be covered by Major Medical Insurance by their employers. If you do not have a group plan you can tie into, the American Swimming Coaches Association has an option you may consider.

#### **3. Dental Insurance**

Dental Insurance is sometimes provided for coaches, though it is not a terribly high priority with most people, however, some individuals may really want this.

#### **4. Professional Expenses Paid**

There are two categories here, expenses for swim meets and professional development expenses. When a coach goes to a meet, the club should pay full and reasonable expenses for that travel. The coach is also the primary asset of any club, so it makes sense to invest in improving that asset. The club does so by providing some funds for professional organization dues to help educate the coach, and some funds for direct educational costs for clinical education or academic education of the coach. More about this in a later section.

#### **5. Vacation time**

The intense nature of the profession, and the unusual hours required are major considerations in the need of a vacation for coaches. We recommend more than two weeks annually . . . the coach needs time to “recharge batteries” more than most because of the intense emotional content of the work. Also, the coach needs family time that is generally not available when the coach has morning and evening workouts, and weekend meets . . . times when spouse and children are usually available for family time.

#### **6. Incentive Opportunities Available**

Many clubs cannot find a way to greatly improve the base pay, but find tremendously creative ways for the coach to be financially rewarded by their own hard work. The provision of these incentives is a valuable asset in offering a position, and the willingness to offer incentives is a sign to a coach that the club is truly interested in providing for the coach in the best way that they can.

A total of 50 points are offered for Compensation.

The score has a decimal point inserted. For example 35 points becomes a score of 3.5 in the final tally.

### ***B. Club and Coach Stability***

#### **1. Will the coach be under contract?**

This is the major point in this section. The nature of the coaching profession is uncertain at best. Coaches need enough security to know that they will be able to put their program into place, and

operate it. A legal contract binding on both parties is the only way to do this. This is the highest point total under this section. If you are offering a significant job, you will be signing a contract for coaching services.

**2. Will the contract be rolling or multi-year?**

This question means that the coach will always have more than a matter of months in their position stability, unless an agreement is reached to separate coach and club. For those unfamiliar with the term, a rolling contract establishes a period of initial employment, and a period of evaluation. If the evaluation is positive, the contract automatically “rolls” for another similar employment period of more than one year. This means that a yearly employment review gives the position a two year run . . . and it is evaluated each year. A multi-year contract is simply an agreement to hire a coach for a finite period, for example, a three year contract. The final evaluation then determines if a new contract is to be written. Both of these are preferable for a coach, to a simple yearly contract. The rolling contract is generally preferred by the coach.

**3. The number of head coaches within the past five years.**

This is a direct evaluation of how successful the club has been in hiring and retaining people. A club with a lot of turnover is not an attractive situation for a coach to come into, because invariably there is a great deal of conflict within the organization.

**4. Is there a written procedure for evaluating the coach?**

This is self-explanatory. Evaluations should be written, to avoid ambiguities and misunderstandings. If you need a model of how to do one, please ask the ASCA.

**5. Does a long-term planning function exist on the board of Directors?**

This question relates directly to the stability of the club. Stable clubs know who they are, what they want to be and by when. Only long-term planning can do this. The existence of a long term plan establishes the club as a serious organization, and will greatly aid in the hiring of the “right” coach, as well as the proper approach to working with that coach.

**6. Does the club fund-raising efforts produce?**

The more fund-raising a club does, the less it depends on dues, and the more parental involvement it has. Both of these factors are important in club stability. We recognize the importance of this factor by the scoring system.

**7. Pool use agreement secured by:**

If the pool is under a multi-year contract, the coach knows that the club has a secure training arrangement.

**8. Has your budget expanded by 5 - 10% or more in the past three years?**

Budget expansion provides one measure of the interest in the club by the Board and the membership. It also shows an aggressive attitude toward club development.

**9. Will you require that your new coach be ASCA Certified?**

Coaches are professionals, and professionals have professional credentials, in this case, coach certification. Certification is a measure of the education, experience and accomplishments of a coach. Later in this booklet, there is a section on the Certification process. If you are not hiring a certified coach, you are not hiring a professional.

(*Note:* Remember, there is a difference between American Red Cross Coaches Safety Training required by USS and ASCA Certification. The USS program deals only with Safety. Certification deals with the coaching field as a whole.)

## **10. Team Growth.**

Clubs that are growing are more stable and more attractive than clubs that are losing members. The maximum score on this section is 50 points.

### ***C. Coach Authority and Responsibility***

To many coaches, this may be the single most important area, because an affirmative answer to question number one gives the coach the freedom to make everything else on this evaluation develop and grow. (Question number one is worth 15 points.)

#### **1. Is the coach the Chief Executive Officer of the organization?**

This is the trend in swimming clubs of all types. This recognizes that present society is composed on two income families to a large extent, and there is less available volunteer time within the family unit. Having the coach as the CEO is desirable, because it places the ultimate responsibility for the function and success of the program in the hands of its major asset, the coach. This encourages the coach to remain in place with a strong sense of "ownership" of the program, and can provide the club with a much more aggressive development program. The Board retains ultimate control of the program with employment control of the CEO. Within this context, the coach is responsible for, and has authority to produce, the club program according to goals developed by the Board and the coach in unison.

#### **2. Is the coach a voting member of the Board?**

The IRS strongly discourages members of the board from receiving compensation. The issue is conflict of interest and they can take away your tax exempt status. If the coach has voting ability it simply means the coach chooses sides so it may be "smarter" for the coach to work on selling ideas and building a consensus before the meeting rather than contribute to a situation that divides a BOD – and be in violation of the IRS. However, The Head Coach should be an ex officio member of the BOD and present at all BOD meetings.

#### **3. Does the coach have sole authority in matters pertaining to the conduct of the swimming program?**

This includes practice times, groups, what is done in the workouts, who coaches what groups, what meets the team attends, how to discipline athletes within the program and all operations directly relating to the professional program planning of the team. Most coaches will not work in a situation where they do not have this sole authority. This is the most attractive model you can offer in club management and direction to most coaches.

#### **4. Is the coach a permanent member of the Nominating Committee?**

This allows the coach considerable input into the selection of people with whom the coach must work with on a regular basis. The professional coach will support the nomination of people who represent a variety of opinion and bias within the club.

#### **5. Does the coach have purchase authority within the confines of the approved budget?**

This is important because the coach is frequently in a position to make favorable purchasing arrangements with swim suppliers, if they have the authority to make these decisions on the spot, rather than through a purchasing decision process that requires time.

#### **6. Does the coach have sole authority for hiring, supervising, training and changing all swim staff?**

This is an important one. The Head Coach must have this authority and responsibility if they are truly to be the Head Coach. Assistants cannot be expected to work for both the Board (and individuals on the Board) and for a Head Coach. Coaches must be able to direct and control their own staff. With this authority comes a responsibility to train, supervise and discipline, (when necessary) that staff.

The maximum score on this section is 50 points. That's all there is to the evaluation!

Now we are going to explain how the scores are tallied, used and what they mean. Later, we will offer some advice on key areas of the evaluation and ways you can work to improve the position you have to offer.

## **VI. HOW ARE THE SCORES TALLIED AND USED, AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN?**

The purpose of the scoring system is to lend an objective number system to each of the three major areas of compensation, authority and responsibility and stability. They are a quick reference system.

Scores in each area total 50 points. We then insert a decimal point to convert the points to a 5.0 scale. (i.e., 43 points becomes a 4.3 score.) Thus, 15 points becomes the top score possible.

As you have seen the points are weighted to give priority to the most important items in the evaluation.

In our Job Service Bulletin, we will list each job with a total score (taken by adding the three sub-scores together.) and with the three scores in each area. For example:

<b>The Smith-Jones Swim Team</b>	
Position Evaluation:	
Compensation:	3.5
Stability:	4.8
Authority and Responsibility:	4.6
Total Score	12.9

Following the above, we will print the job description of the position.

When a coach calls us to find out more about a position, we will review the complete Position Evaluation including the information page with them.

The scores are highly reflective of what most coaches will find attractive about a position. It is very difficult to score well on the evaluation without good results on the important parts of the position.

Not all coaches are looking for the same things in a job. A young coach may be primarily concerned about authority and responsibility, and compensation may mean less to him than to another coach. A young coach with a family may be most interested in stability or in compensation. Others will seek a balance. The position evaluation scores are basic information for the coach seeking a position.

For you as an employer, however, they are perfect guidelines to tell you how to improve your position and make it more attractive to a coach. As we said earlier, almost every team we work with tells us that their coach is their most important asset. This process will help you employ a better swimming coach for a better position.

## VII. HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR POSITION

This is one of the most important sections of this booklet.

Now that you know how your position scores, the important thing is to work to improve upon them. If you scored well, you can see quite clearly from the evaluation form itself some of the other things you can provide to upgrade your offering.

Our purpose in this section is to help those of you who did not score well. The focus should be on the major items that are scored. In item A below, we will suggest some ideas that will help you improve your score. You can also pick up many other ideas by asking successful clubs how they compensate their coaches. There is an endless list of creative ideas out there, in swimming and outside of our sport. Once you understand what is important to the coach, and why, your interest in improving the position will lead you to creative ways to do so. Then, in item B below, we will look at the other scored items.

### **A. Major Scored items**

#### **1. Compensation**

The most significant item is base salary, with a 30 point maximum. (60% of total available) We have already explained why this is important, now lets look at what can be done to improve it.

Look at your budget. What percentage of budget is your coaching line item? In good clubs, it is at least 50% of the total, in many cases considerably higher. Where does it come from? In most cases, a good segment is dues. The rest is fund-raising in one way or another. The process of fund-raising and budget development is not terribly well done in most American clubs. The ASCA can provide you with a paper on budget development, and fund-raising ideas. Call us at 1-800-356-2722 for a copy.

You should be fund-raising at least as much money as you raise in dues. Any club in America with 100 swimmers can pay their coach \$40,000 a year, with very reasonable dues. This is an adequate compensation level for most positions in most areas of the country.

It is more attractive if you also allow the coach an incentive program. We give this the second highest point value. Coaches have some very inventive fund raising ideas that can benefit the club and raise money. When the coach brings an idea like this to the club, they should benefit directly. They may benefit even more if it is an idea where they can do most of the required work.

Clubs use incentive programs to reward the coaching behavior that they most want. Some use membership numbers, some use retention rates, some use National, Zone, or State qualifiers and some use other inventive programs that reward what they want. This is one area that you can use to upgrade the program just simply by saying "yes, you can bring us an incentive program to supplement your compensation."

Finally, Major Medical is a 4 point issue. You can purchase it for your coach on an individual basis, or you can attach the coach to another group. In any case, it has become a real necessity for most coaches.

Base Salary, Incentives and Major Medical . . . you can improve all three. Active fund-raising is a must . . . and fund-raising is not begging. You can provide services for the dollars you ask for. Talk to us about fund-raising.

## **2. Second, Club and Coach Stability**

What scores well here? Coaches Contracts, Pool Contracts and Club history.

Why should a coach have a contract? Because the nature of the job is volatile and intense. The coach needs to know that they have security to make the best long-term decisions for the good of the program, and that they will be around to benefit from the long-term results. Frankly, the more experienced and “proven” the coach, the more they deserve a contract of substantial length either rolling or multi-year. Even a new coach needs a given period of time with which they know they will be allowed to work to prove themselves. The contract should be written to provide stability for the club also, with some guarantee that the coach will not leave arbitrarily either. A successful coach should be on the type of contract that always provides them with more than one year of security, except at the review period, when they have one year remaining on the current contract.

Similarly, the coach is concerned that the club have a firm and long-term agreement with the pool facility that is used. The longer the term, the better. Year to year contracts are better than none, but a handshake is only dependent upon the “presence of each hand.” Should a new individual in a facility control position choose to not extend that hand, the coach would be very concerned. Contracts protect both parties. You should have at least one with your primary facilities.

We award 12 points for a good stability record with past coaches. The problems with athletes, parents and administration during coaching change-over are many and relatively long-lasting. The parents are disenchanted, the athletes are wary and the facility administration is usually not pleased either. Everyone benefits by a stable coaching staff and competitive environment. A board that is continually hiring new coaches has shown an inability to work well with coaches, and an inability to hire wisely. This may be because of any number of factors, but the bottom line is that some major problems exist in situations where coaches change frequently.

If you do have a situation where the Head Coach position has changed more than twice in five years, try to have a fully documented set of explanations as to why this has happened. Try to present as objective a view of the situation as possible. Sometimes it is also best to have new volunteer Board leadership when a new coach is employed, so no “baggage” from the old relationship is carried along. At the very least, change the people involved in the selection process if you have had a number of coaches in a short period of time.

Coaches Contracts, Pool Contracts, Club History . . . the keys to scoring well on stability.

## **3. Coaches Authority and Responsibility**

Of the three major areas, this one may have the most difference of opinion among coaches as to its importance to them. Some coaches want a lot of both Authority and Responsibility, while others wish to be nothing more than an employee. The majority of coaches will, like most of us, want a strong sense of “ownership” of their jobs. That is the best feeling any employee can have from their employer, and that is what we encourage in scoring this section.

The key item is treating the coach as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the club. This means that the Board retains control by the employment of the Head Coach. Within that agreement, and by the means of Goals and Objectives that are agreed to in common, the coach is empowered to get the job done. The Board acts as a planning and evaluation group, and works for the long range good of the club. The coach assigns day to day tasks to committees, monitors their work, and makes all relevant decisions. This is the very best method of operating a club in today’s society. The one thing it does require is hiring an excellent coach, and that is the point of this whole exercise, isn’t it?

You can make this major improvement in your program just by deciding to do it and by mapping out the steps to get there. Essentially, this is a Board of Directors decision that is vital to the development of the club.

Next in this area, the coach must have the sole authority of the staff. This is not the case in many clubs, and where it is not, it leads to very weak programs, as the assistants are never sure who they must please, who they work for or who they must listen to. The Head Coach, in this sense, is more like the general manager of the team, and must hire, train, supervise and discipline the staff. No coach can work for two bodies. Again, this is an improvement worth 10 points, that can be made by the Board of Directors.

Third, the coach must make all decisions pertaining to the conduct of the swimming program. These are technical decisions that are represented by the list below, though this list is surely not exhaustive.

- Practice dates, times and groups.
- Practice routines and schedules.
- Conduct of practice.
- Routine discipline of athletes.
- Swim Meet scheduling.
- Events for athlete competition.
- Duties of assistant coaches.
- Learning curriculum for athletes and coaches.

These are areas where the coach must have sole decision making power. There are a number of areas where coach and Board must work together to find the answers. Some of these might be:

- Club Budget
- Swimming Fees
- Team Transportation
- Fund-raising Activities

The principle that you should establish is coach involvement, in a significant way, with all decision making on the club.

CEO, staff responsibility, technical responsibility . . . these are the key areas to improve in Authority and Responsibility.

### ***B. Information on the other items on the Evaluation***

In this section, we are going to offer some other ideas and information on the remaining items on the Evaluation form. These may be directly useful to you, or they stimulate some creativity on your part, to improve your offered position.

#### **1. Compensation**

a. Question 3. Dental Insurance - According to our latest survey, not many programs offer dental insurance to their coaches, but it is a valuable addition if you can do so. Several teams had dentists among their members and offered free dental services to the coach and the coach's family, in exchange for swim fees. This is a great idea.

b. Question 4. Professional Expenses Paid - You should pay swim meet expenses in total. This is the same as an expense account for any businessman. A receipt system is completely appropriate, or a set amount to be reimbursed per day is equally acceptable.

The idea of an educational fund will be one of the best investments you can make. The coach is your most important club asset. It only makes sense to invest in the improvement of that asset.

Funds should be accounted for by the coach, and if swimming clinics are involved, a brief report to the Board on what was covered at the clinic is a good form of feedback.

Coaches education is available in many forms. Clinics are one concept, with the ASCA Annual World Clinic the largest in the world. It is held in early September each year. There are also regional and local clinics that your coach will become aware of through the local coaches association. These are especially valuable for assistant coaches, without a major financial investment by the club. A World Clinic trip will typically cost several hundred dollars for airfare, several hundred more for lodging, registration, meals and incidentals can bring the total investment to close to \$1,000. It is money well spent. The World Clinic not only educates, it inspires and renews the dedication of the coach to the sport and to the profession. It is truly an inspiration to discuss swimming issues with the greatest coaches from all over the world. It also has the largest swimming equipment exhibit hall in the world, and coaches can make remarkable savings in equipment purchases.

Home study programs are another option for coaches education. ASCA and other organizations provide home study in swimming topics, management ideas, "people skills" and other important items. These are done in multi-media schools, audio tapes, books, videos and other items. Included under home study might be a telephone budget item so the coach can call and discuss swimming with other coaches. In solving specific problems, this is sometimes the best, or the only way to do so. We have provided a list of coaches education sources in the back of this book. Non-swimming education that relates, such as time management, stress management, leadership skills and business skills all are very valuable to the coach.

A final note on education. One of the best things you can do for your coach is send them to the major meets, such as senior USS nationals, the NCAA's and international meets. They will learn more in a practical on-deck sense by being there, than by almost any other way. Additionally, the coach learns about those meets, and will be more comfortable when your athletes attend them. The importance of this comfort level of the coach, to the athlete, cannot be over-emphasized. Even if your team does not have athletes involved yet, consider sending your coach to these meets.

Interview costs, and moving expenses are related items. Interview costs are typically either paid for by the club, or split, and if the coach is selected, his half is later paid by the club. Moving costs, especially with a coach with a family, is a major item these days. Most coaches will move themselves, and will want to be reimbursed for direct expenses such as rental equipment, temporary housing, etc. Some coaches will require professional moving. This item is highly negotiable, and some clubs have found some very creative solutions, including club members helping the coach and their family to move, with physical labor and club owned vehicles. You will need to creatively plan for this situation.

c. Question 5. Paid Annual Vacation Time - Coaching is an emotionally charged job, and also one that tends, over the course of the season, to become increasingly narrowing in scope, as the coach and athletes focus ever more closely on championships. A vacation is a necessity for the coach, and indirectly, for their family. Two weeks is typical in the beginning of a position, increasing later on. Some older coaches appreciate more as their career progresses. This is usually very practical where good assistant coaches are present. One fine coach we know, negotiated a summer study season at the end of his fourth year in a position. His chief senior assistant became the acting head coach that summer, while he traveled to Europe and studied swimming programs there. This is the type of idea that can extend the life of a coach with a particular club, and we encourage you to think of "renewing" concepts of this type for your position. Typically, a coach will take a vacation period at the end of the winter and the summer season.

d. Question 6. Finally, people have asked us for examples of incentive programs. Without trying to provide details that will, of necessity, change in each situation, here are some of the ideas that fit within the philosophy of “what gets rewarded, gets done.”

**Coach run :**

- Learn to Swim Programs (SwimAmerica program)
- Pre-school LTS
- Masters Swim Program
- Handicapped Swim
- Corporate Wellness Program
- Fund-raising Percentages
- Private Technique Lessons

**Coaches rewarded for:**

- Swimmer recruitment rate
- Swimmer retention rate
- Team or individual performances - (locally or nationally)
- Special events: stroke clinics for non-members, etc.

\* A special note on private lessons. This can be one of the most rewarding of incentives for the coach. The philosophy goes like this: The coach is expected to offer teaching to the whole team. Strokes, starts, turns, etc., should be a regular part of the program, as should normal correctional methods. The coach receives a salary to work with “the team”. When an individual wishes to take lessons above that offered by the team, either for correctional purposes, or for furthering their skill level, the coach should have the option to provide this. Whenever the coach spends individual time with an athlete, it is taking some time away from the group. Private lessons are offered in golf, tennis and many other sports. Swimming can be the same.

**Building a Financial Package for the Coach - A Sample**

Lets take a look at how we can build a complete financial package for a coach. Base

Salary (from Membership dues and fund-raising for a club with 100 athletes)	> \$25,000
Incentives: Recruitment of athletes (for 101-125 - 50% of annual dues)	==> add \$6,250
SwimAmerica Learn to Swim Program (Coach receives 60% of net and totally runs the program.)	==> add \$3,000
Masters Swimming (Coach receives 60% of net: 20 athletes, \$30.00 /mo)	==> add \$1800
Coach organized & Directed fund-raiser (Coach receives 25% of net)	==> add \$2,000
Private lessons: 2 lessons a week @ \$20.00 per hour (\$40 a week X 40 weeks)	==> add \$1,600
Total compensation package	=> \$39,650

## 2. Club and Coach Stability

a. We have discussed rolling, or multi-year contracts earlier, but lets add just a few points:

- They allow for long-term planning.
- They allow for an open and trusting relationship.
- They set up a climate for open, honest evaluations.

The value of an open, honest evaluation process that is not job-threatening cannot be over-emphasized. If you want improvement in an area, it must be evaluated and measured.

The rolling contract works like this: Coach Jones signs a contract in June, for a 24 month period. 12 months later, the clubs does a formal evaluation, and so does the coach. The club makes an offer of improvements to the contract. As soon as it is accepted by both sides, it automatically extends for another 24 (or more) months. This means that you are never negotiating an almost expired contract. The club must indicate an intention to terminate the contract during the assigned negotiation period, or it automatically extends "as is" for another year.

b. Question 4. A written procedure to evaluate the coach is valuable, because it offers the opinion of the club board or its designates in a formal way. It also provides a written measurement of growth and development. A written evaluation is much more powerful than a verbal one, because it demands greater thought. In the same context, written goals, objectives and reports are more powerful than verbal ones.

c. Question 5. The existence of a long-term planning function is an important evidence that the club is committed to the long-term improvement of swimming in the area, and indicative that the board is committed to the "highest" function of the board . . . as a planning body. If there is no long term plan, the board is reduced to operating in a management by crisis standard. Stability comes from a long term vision of the club, and a committed mission to attain that vision.

The American Swimming Coaches Association offers a Club Assistance Program (CAP) on a cost-share basis, for any club wanting some help in planning and evaluation and a long range planning evaluation called VVMOST. If you are interested in using this service, call us at 1-800-356-2722.

d. Question 6. Club stability is greatly enhanced by a tradition of diversification of income producing items. This also indicates a community awareness of the importance of the swim program. Most coaches and clubs would like to have a significant percentage of their budget come from fund-raising.

f. Question 8. Budget expansion is indicative of an aggressive, active approach to program improvement, and is highly desirable to the coach.

## 3. Authority and Responsibility

All the items in this evaluation section really pertain to the same philosophy: A good swim coach has a strong sense of ownership of the program where they coach. All six items listed here are varying ways to measure and observe the degree to which the management of the club allows and encourages this.

The CEO concept is important, and for coaches who want to work in this environment, it is often a stepping-stone approach, where initial authority in this area may be less than complete, and then is

gradually added to as the Board gains confidence in the coach. It is useful to keep in mind the various potential ways that this confidence can be shown. For sake of illustration, the following might be one scenario of escalating responsibility for the coach:

Questions # 3 and # 6 relate to the prime function of hiring a coach and should be “givens.” The coach must have control of the program they create and the staff that implements it. You hire a coach and you allow them complete control of the technical program, as well as the staff who will carry out that program. Anything less is very undesirable, and is almost a guarantee of long-term failure.

# 5 might be next. You allow the coach to have purchase authority within the confines of the approved budget.

#4 would add the coach as a permanent member of the nominating committee. This allows the coach to help select those people that they will be working most closely with, and really allows the coach a great deal of input on the club “management team.”

# 2 – designate the coach as an ex officio member of the BOD with voice, but no vote.

Finally, appointing the coach the CEO of the organization says that the position asks the coach to be completely responsible for the success of the program, in line with the goals and objectives mutually agreed upon by Board and coach. This does not mean that the coach will do all the work, but it does mean that the coach will be sure that the tasks will be done.

Now that we have talked about all the items on the evaluation form, you should have an excellent idea of how to improve your position. Once you have decided on a complete package for the position, you begin the procedure for hiring and working with your coach.

## **VIII. HIRING A COACH**

This section is designed to take you on a step-by-step procedure to employ a swimming coach. It is intended to be a guide, not a concrete structure. The local situations that you must consider will be a major determinant in how you actually proceed. The assumption made here is that you are seeking to hire a Head Coach. Some obvious modifications are indicated when you are employing assistant coaches. The assistant coach employment procedures should be operated by the Head Coach in their role in selecting staff.

### ***A. Initial Considerations.***

How does a position opening occur? Usually in one of two ways. First, the club decides that a change is in order. Your first responsibility is to act in an ethical manner towards the incumbent coach. This includes having provided several evaluations indicating the areas that should be improved, and suggestions on how to do so. If the coach has not provided the services to your satisfaction, and the Board has decided to make a change, the ethically correct behavior is to notify the coach in writing of this decision, and setting forth a timetable for separation that is responsible to the athletes, the coach and the program. Once the coach has been notified, you are ethically free to seek a new coach.

The temptation is large to “test the waters” and see “who might be available” before telling the incumbent coach that you wish them to leave the program. This is unethical behavior, and a coach who will talk to you seriously about a presently filled condition, is acting outside the usually acceptable bounds of conduct in the world of swimming. Swimming is a sport, not the type of business where such behavior is commonplace. Coaches must “live with one another” much longer than any one position placement

may list. A responsible professional will not discuss a filled position. As an employer, if you find someone who will discuss such a position, remember that a person who will act unethically in one instance, may be a person who will do so in other situations. Let the buyer beware.

The second scenario is a coach who wishes to move on. This is quite common in swimming, as in all professions. The ethically correct way to proceed is for the coach to notify the club when they are going to interview for another position. The coach should also notify the club as soon as they have reached a decision on accepting another position, and should also, as above, work out a separation schedule that is in the best interests of all parties concerned. As soon as you have been notified by the coach that they are accepting a new position, you should begin to seek a new coach.

The major question in this instance is why not seek a coach as soon as you are notified that the coach is interviewing? The answer is not simple. Interviews are unpredictable. The coach may: A) decide to accept the new position, B) decide that his present position with you is a whole lot more attractive than they realized, C) decide that the positions are close, and come back to ask you if you will match the offer of the other club, or D) Not be offered the position.

In 3 of 4 of the above possibilities, you will not need a new coach. In any case, you will want to review the entire employment situation with your coach, to determine why they were seeking a new position in the first place. This will give you a pretty good window on the future.

Once you know that you have a position to offer, the next thing to do is to establish the procedure to fill it.

### ***B. Using Job Service***

In Part II, on page 2, we described how Job Service functions. Please review that at this time.

Job Service is a passive process. The employer lists a position and waits for responses. The coach lists himself, and waits for interest. Each reads the service, and contacts our office or the other party directly. This is the "usual" method, and it has been highly successful in placing Certified professional swimming coaches.

You simply complete the position evaluation, return it to us for scoring along with a descriptive paragraph and a check for \$200. We list it immediately. There are no deadlines for internet posting, we post within 48 hours of receiving, usually we post within a couple of hours.

### ***C. The Interview Process***

You should receive a number of inquiries from coaches after they see your position in Job Service. You may also see a coach in Job Service that you are interested in. By calling the ASCA, you can receive further information on that coach. You will have decided upon a "closing date" for applications. Once that has passed, you will evaluate the candidates available and select several that you would like to interview.

We recommend that you start with 4-6 to telephone interview. The telephone interview should have several structured questions that you ask each candidate, and can then compare answers. You can also ascertain the real interest of each candidate in your position. A committee discussion following the telephone interviews should review each candidate, their resume and results of the phone interview. You should then narrow the field to 2-4 candidates and arrange for an interview of those in whom you have the most interest.

The number that you interview may actually be driven as much by finances as anything else. If all the

candidates you are interested in require plane transportation to your site, it will be an expensive process. You will find yourself negotiating with each potential candidate as to expenses for the interview process. If you can establish a budget prior to this discussion, it will make the decision on how many to interview in person much simpler.

### **1. The Interview: We offer the following ideas on the interview itself**

- Use not fewer than 3 nor more than 5 people to do the interview.
- Be sure that all those on the committee are familiar with the information on each candidate before the interview, so they can focus on new information.
- Structure your process so each candidate answers some of the same questions, and some that are unique to their special qualities and/or attributes.
- Allow time for the candidate to express their own ideas, and also to ask questions. You can gain a great deal of knowledge from this type of “brainpicking”.
- Remember to ask about the candidates perception of what the position might be in the future. Not everything you need to know is in the person’s past performance. Coaching positions involve motivation through providing a vision, see what vision each candidate holds.
- The coach will have a number of questions. Remember to allow the candidate a chance to “interview the club” also.
- Finish the interview by informing the candidate as to the next step in the process, and the timetable for its execution.

### **2. Post - Interview**

Following the interview process, the committee will again discuss each candidate, and seek a consensus on whom to offer the position to. In some cases, this will mean a ranking list of preferred candidates, if you are unsure of acceptance by your first choice candidate. At this point, you should contact your choice by a previously agreed upon date and method, and begin negotiations. (see next section) Contact ASCA to pull the ad from the Job Service Bulletin.

Once you have negotiated a contract, have the courtesy to send a note thanking the other candidates, informing them of your choice and telling them of any major critical items in their own presentations that might have swayed you either positively or negatively. We all appreciate learning how we can improve our presentation!

#### ***D. Negotiation of a Contract***

A contract, or letter of agreement should be offered as a standard part of the employment process. Literally everything in the evaluation presented is a negotiable item, and should give you some excellent ideas of what to include in your contract and why. Use of a legal representative by both employer and coach is common, and should be considered a normal contractual process. What follows is a contract shopping list. These are items to consider including in a contract. You will notice that the contract is

also a Job Description. ASCA sells a 90 page booklet of contract information, contact us.

### ***E. Start Up Process and Orientation***

One of the most significant time periods in the employment of a swimming coach is the initial several weeks and months that they are on the job. The club should make every effort to get this new relationship off to a good start. The following suggestions have been useful in many cases:

1. Make certain there is constant, perhaps daily, contact between a board member and the coach during this period. The coach will have numerous problems of both simple and complex natures, where they will need a "resource person" to help solve. Having help getting the basics squared away is of vital importance.
2. Work on a comfortable way to introduce the new coach to the families on the team. Perhaps a team picnic or other social event, or perhaps a series of "welcome coffees" organized by geographic areas served by the team would be better. This will allow both athletes and parents to get a basic introduction to the coach, and learn of some of the coach's plans for the team in a relaxed atmosphere.
3. Use the arrival of the new coach to make other major changes in the team and its operation. It is the ideal time to do so and also is a great PR vehicle to get space in the local paper or TV station. New people are News!
4. Establish the reporting system that you want from the coach during this period. How do you want them to tell you what is going on with the team? The ASCA does have a sample monthly report form available for the coach to use. Encourage the coach to do so, if you want monthly written documents about the organization.
5. Orientation of the coach to the local swimming committee is also very important. Take the coach to the LSC meeting and introduce them to all the people present, and give the new coach some help in "sorting out the players."
6. Your own team "welcome wagon" for the coach and their family may be helpful. Local information on "what is located where", and all the type of family intelligence you need when you move, can really accelerate the break-in process. Some Board member should also make themselves the official "question person" for the coach and their family, to help with unpredictable needs of information.

Above all, try to avoid the "honeymoon" syndrome, where at first, no one will tell the coach of any problems that are occurring. Work hard to establish open, honest and direct lines of communication right away. With a good start up process, you are on your way to a successful relationship.

### ***F. The On-Going Relationship***

#### **1. Evaluations**

Once the coach is on-board with the club, regular evaluations of the coach and evaluations of the club board by the coach, are the best formal way of ensuring a smooth working relationship. The purpose of this mutual evaluation is to identify and correct any emerging situations before they become problems. Doing this process once per season is perhaps the best schedule.

The coach should be evaluated by a committee of three people. A mix of evaluators is recommended. For example, one age group parent, one senior parent and one parent of a swimmer who has

been through the program and is now in college. An evaluation should be discussed point by point with the coach by the evaluation committee.

Listed below is a sample list of areas to evaluate. The evaluation committee may use this list as a starting basis for developing an evaluation specific to the needs of the individual club situation. For many of these areas the evaluation committee might consider using an objective numbering system to judge both the frequency and the quality. For example:

## Sample Coaches Evaluation

### Frequency

- 1 - never
- 2 - occasionally
- 3 - half of the time
- 4 - most of the time
- 5 - always

### Quality

- 1 - poor
- 2 - acceptable
- 3 - good
- 4 - very good
- 5 - exceptional

### a. On Deck

#### Coach-athlete interaction

- Uses encouragement
- Works with certain individuals
- Works with all individuals
- Works with groups
- Works with the team
- Uses praise
- Uses constructive criticism
- Uses goal setting
- Uses appropriate discipline

#### Teaching Skills

- Uses demonstrations
- Uses presentations
- Uses questions as a teaching tool
- Provides constructive feedback

#### Practice Management

- Arrives early
- Workout is organized and well planned
- Workout begins on time
- Keeps athletes engaged in productive activity

#### Meet Management

- Arrives early
- Structures individual warmups
- Supervises warmup
- Attends meetings
- Observes swims
- Provides encouragement
- Uses Constructive criticism
- Handles disputes with officials

#### Other

- Dresses appropriately
- Positive role model

### b. Administrative

#### Meets, handles or oversees:

- Entry procedure
- Disbursement of meet information
- Posting or announcement of meet results
- Meet publicity
- Team travel

#### Office

- Maintains reliable office hours
- Handles or oversees best times
- Handles or oversees team files
- Handles or oversees team records

## Communication

- Provides written reports to the Board
- Oversees production and content of newsletter
- Oversees production of team roster
- Establishes and maintains contact with media
- Initiates frequent informal meetings with Board personnel
- Conducts effective parent meetings
- Planning/fund raising/financial
- Directs/participates in team long range planning
- Directs/participates in fund raising
- Directs/participates in the budget process key

## Team Growth - actively promotes team growth by:

- Initiating and directing special programs, for example:  
clinics, SwimAmerica Learn to Swim, summer club recruiting, masters/triathlon clinics, etc.
- Knowledge
- Continues to pursue professional education

## c. People/Personal

- Integrity
- Respect
- Courtesy
- Consistency of approach
- Fairness
- Approachability
- Gracefully accepts input
- Dependable
- Handles relationships with parents professionally
- Appropriate dress and grooming
- Directs parent education programs

## d. Written comments:

Evaluation forms are available from the ASCA office and by email at [gedson@swimmingcoach.org](mailto:gedson@swimmingcoach.org).

## 2. Reporting

The best idea for the coach in cementing this relationship is to offer regular and complete reporting to the club board. Call ASCA for a report form. The best idea for the club board is to communicate honestly to the coach any things that they feel need improvement and then provide a budget and appropriate time to make these corrections.

## 3. Continuing Education

The education fund for the coach is one of the best investments a club can make. It shows a real commitment of the club to the improvement of the coach and conveys a sense of confidence that is irreplaceable.

## G. Terminating a Relationship

Just as a well planned and directed hiring procedure will result in a happy employer/coach relationship, a professional procedure for terminating the relationship will leave all involved with as satisfactory a resolution as possible.

Termination's occur for predictable reasons:

- The coach wishes to leave for a more advantageous position.
- The club wishes to employ another coach with different/better credentials.
- The club/coach no longer agree on policy, and both wish to terminate the agreement.

Some principles to follow:

- 1) The coach/club should be the first party informed that the other has made a separation decision.

2) Contractual obligations should be honored. In the case of a coach leaving before the end of the contract, the club should pay off the contract, or negotiate a partial payment, or the coach should ask for a release from the contract on a time schedule that will satisfy the club.

3) Both parties should work to ensure that the welfare of the team athletes are attended to. Both club and coach share the responsibility for this transition.

4) Both club and coach must have notified the other party of their intention to seek another position before they work with the ASCA Job Service.

5) Both parties should work to maintain a professionally correct posture during the separation procedure. No positive good is served by speaking ill of the other party. If this is not adhered to, much damage can be done to the reputation of both club and coach during this period.

Professional relationships are formed, maintained and terminated with the good will of both coach and employer!

## **IX. AN EXPLANATION OF COACHES CERTIFICATION**

### ***A. History***

The American Swimming Coaches Association began a Certification program in 1985, after a 25 year period of thought and consideration. More than 4000 ASCA members have become Certified. A number of changes have evolved in the program, and one of the main concepts behind the program is that it is dynamic . . . we expect change to continue.

### ***B. Purpose***

The purpose of Coach Certification is to ensure that the credentials of a coach are evaluated in specific terms of education, experience, and achievement. This encourages continuing coach education, which improves both the coach and those whom the coach serves.

### ***C. The Cornerstones of Certification***

1. Education - Coaches are awarded units for academic education, clinical education and home study programs. Their Certification cards list both Total Lifetime education units and units during the last 3 year period. The latter indicates that the coach has continued to educate themselves and stay current with the professional information available.

2. Experience - Coaches are awarded units for volunteer, assistant and head coaching positions. They are also awarded units for special assignments, such as all-star camps and related items that add to their professional preparation. When they are initially Certified, coaches have an experience evaluation filled out by their current employer.

3. Achievement - Coaches are awarded credit for the quality of athletes they have worked with. Access to the top three levels of the program is geared to Achievement. This means that the coach has been the primary coach of an athlete who has achieved a significant level of excellence in their arena of competition. (i.e. Top 16 national times for an age group swimmer, All-American for a High School swimmer, etc.)

### ***D. What the different levels mean***

Levels 1 and 2 are oriented strictly to education and experience, and require specific academic work. Levels 3, 4 and 5 all have elevated requirements for education and experience, and adds the Achievement items above. Level 3 represents the top 15% of achievements in the USA, Level 4

the top 6-8% and Level 5, the top 5% in the USA.

Education and Experience must be balanced at all five levels of the program. Coaches Certification is also geared to the type of program the coach has worked in. This is designated as follows.

A club coach might be "Level 3 - USS" or "Level 2 - Age Group" and so on . . . both the Level and the coaching category is listed.

A college coach might be "Level 4 - NCAA I" , or "Level 3-NCAA III".

The importance of this to the employer is obvious. There is a tremendous difference in preparation and experience in a Level 4 Age Group Coach and a Level 4 - NCAA II Coach. One is not "better" than the other, they are simply differentially prepared, for their specific positions.

Any coach you employ should be Certified. A Certified Coach is one who cares enough about their profession and about their position, to be evaluated and to work to improve their professional standing. Who would want anything else?

Remember, there is a difference between USS Coaches Safety Training and Certification!

## **X. ASCA EDUCATION SERVICES FOR COACHES**

The ASCA offers a great variety of services for coaches. We offer educational services in Sport Science, Sport Management and "People Skills", as well as club and personal time management courses.

We consult with coaches on contracts, offer samples and even help the coach negotiate the contract if that is what is wanted.

We have clinics, home study programs, video and audio tapes and books for the coach.

Almost any coaching related service you can imagine, we have available, many in different forms to serve different needs.

All of these ideas have come from our membership. If you have an idea that we don't offer, we'll do our best to provide it. Give us a call at 1-800-356-2722.

## **XI. ASCA SERVICES FOR CLUBS/ATHLETES/PARENTS**

ASCA also services non-coach participants in the sport of swimming.

For clubs we offer educational programs on club administration, Job Services to employ coaches, a Club Assistance Program to provide direct consulting services to teams, long range planning facilitation to help clubs chart future courses of action, an Achievement Awards Program for swimmers of all ages and abilities, World Ranking Certificates for elite athletes and telephone consulting to employers.

We will help you find a coach, work with a coach and retain a coach. We can help you build your budget, train your coach and motivate your athletes. We can help your athletes get financial aid to college.

We're here to serve the sport of swimming. To serve the Olympic Sport of Swimming.  
The Sport we love . . . with the finest people in the world.  
Give us a call.  
You will enjoy working with us.

**American Swimming Coaches Association**

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954-563-4930 or 1-800-356-2722.

