BOW VALLEY HOCKEY SOCIETY COACH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

1. Program Introduction

The Bow Valley Hockey Society (BVHS) is committed to providing a positive hockey experience that emphasizes fun, participation, skill development, safety, respect, and personal growth.

Recognizing that effective coaching is essential to player development, BVHS is pleased to introduce its Coach Mentorship Program for the 2026–2027 hockey season.

For more than two decades, Hockey Canada and its provincial and local hockey partners have encouraged the development of coach mentorship initiatives to strengthen coaching education, promote leadership, and support the long-term development of hockey players.

Building on this philosophy, BVHS is establishing a structured mentorship program that connects experienced coaches with individuals who are new to coaching, seeking additional guidance, or interested in becoming involved in the game.

An important component of the program is providing BVHS U18 players with opportunities to explore coaching, develop leadership skills, and give back to the hockey community.

Through mentorship, education, collaboration, and practical experience, BVHS aims to develop confident, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic coaches who will positively influence future generations of hockey players.

The 2026–2027 season will serve as the program's inaugural pilot year. BVHS will evaluate participation, feedback, and overall program effectiveness to determine opportunities for improvement and future expansion.

2. Program Philosophy

Great coaches help develop great players. Great mentors help develop great coaches.

The BVHS Coach Mentorship Program is founded on the belief that coaching development is an ongoing process built through education, experience, collaboration, and reflection.

Mentorship is not about identifying weaknesses or evaluating coaching performance. Rather, it is about providing encouragement, sharing knowledge, building confidence, and creating opportunities for continuous improvement.

BVHS recognizes that every coach brings unique strengths, experiences, and perspectives to the rink.

The role of a mentor is to support those strengths while helping coaches develop new skills, overcome challenges, and create positive learning environments for their players.

The program will emphasize:

Development First: Supporting the growth of coaches and players at every level.

Positive Leadership: Encouraging confidence, communication, and effective leadership.

Collaboration: Creating opportunities for coaches to learn from one another.

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Respect: Promoting an inclusive, supportive, and respectful hockey environment.

Continuous Learning: Recognizing that coaching development is a lifelong process.

Community Involvement: Encouraging experienced coaches and U18 players to contribute to the future of BVHS.

Above all, the program will reinforce the belief that hockey should be an enjoyable, rewarding, and positive experience for everyone involved.

3. What Is a Coach Mentor?

A mentor is commonly defined as a trusted advisor, counsellor, or guide.

Within the Bow Valley Hockey Society, a Coach Mentor is an experienced individual who willingly shares their hockey knowledge, coaching experience, and leadership skills to support the development of another coach.

A Coach Mentor is not expected to be an expert in every aspect of hockey.

Instead, mentors are individuals who have developed valuable knowledge through coaching experience, education, certification programs, clinics, seminars, workshops, and continued involvement in the game.

Effective mentors understand that leadership is not simply about providing instructions. It is about positively influencing others, building relationships, encouraging growth, and helping individuals achieve their potential.

A successful Coach Mentor will:

- Lead by example and demonstrate BVHS's core values.
- Share practical coaching knowledge and experiences.
- Provide constructive, respectful, and encouraging feedback.
- Help coaches develop confidence and leadership skills.
- Support effective practice planning and player development.
- Encourage open communication and collaborative problem-solving.
- Recognize individual strengths and opportunities for growth.
- Promote a positive, safe, and inclusive hockey environment.

The ultimate objective is to help coaches become more confident, capable, and effective leaders while supporting the long-term development of BVHS players.

4. Program Purpose and Objectives

4.1 Program Purpose

The purpose of the BVHS Coach Mentorship Program is to create a supportive and structured environment in which experienced coaches can share their knowledge with developing coaches and aspiring young leaders.

The program will provide opportunities for mentorship both on and off the ice, while strengthening the overall coaching culture within the Bow Valley Hockey Society.

4.2 Primary Objectives

Coach Development

Provide new and developing BVHS coaches with access to experienced mentors who can offer guidance, encouragement, practical coaching advice, and constructive feedback.

U18 Leadership Development

Introduce interested U18 players to coaching through supervised, age-appropriate opportunities that develop leadership, communication, responsibility, and confidence.

Mentor Engagement

Encourage experienced BVHS coaches to remain actively involved in the Society by sharing their knowledge and contributing to the development of future coaches.

Player Development

Improve the overall quality of coaching within BVHS, helping create positive and effective learning environments that support player development.

Coaching Culture

Strengthen collaboration, communication, and consistency among BVHS coaches while promoting the Society's development-first philosophy.

Long-Term Sustainability

Establish a mentorship framework that can be evaluated, refined, and expanded in future seasons.

5. Program Structure

The BVHS Coach Mentorship Program will operate as a one-year pilot during the **2026–2027 hockey season**.

Participation will be voluntary and open to eligible individuals within the Bow Valley Hockey Society.

The program will consist of three primary participant groups.

5.1 Coach Mentors

Experienced BVHS coaches who volunteer to share their knowledge, experience, and leadership skills with developing coaches and U18 participants.

5.2 Coach Mentees

Current BVHS coaches who wish to receive additional support, develop their coaching abilities, strengthen their confidence, or learn from an experienced coach.

The program is particularly encouraged for individuals who are new to coaching, although coaches at all experience levels are welcome to participate.

5.3 U18 Player Mentees

Current BVHS U18 players who are interested in exploring coaching and developing leadership skills through practical experience with a younger BVHS team.

These participants will be introduced to coaching responsibilities under the guidance of an experienced Coach Mentor and the team's coaching staff.

6. How the Program Works

6.1 Registration and Participation

BVHS will distribute information about the Coach Mentorship Program to its coaching community and U18 player families.

Interested participants will have the opportunity to register in one of three categories:

1. Experienced Coach Mentor
2. Coach Mentee
3. U18 Player Mentee

Registration information will be distributed through BVHS communication channels, including email announcements, social media, and the Society's website.

6.2 Mentor and Mentee Pairing

Following registration, the BVHS Manager, Development, acting as the Coach Mentorship Program Coordinator, will review applications and coordinate mentor–mentee pairings.

Where possible, pairings will consider coaching experience, development interests, age divisions, scheduling availability, and individual goals.

Mentors may be assigned to support a Coach Mentee, a U18 Player Mentee, or both, depending on program participation and mentor availability.

6.3 Initial Meeting and Development Goals

At the beginning of the mentorship relationship, mentors and mentees will be encouraged to meet to establish expectations and identify areas of interest or development.

These discussions may include practice planning, teaching skills, communication, bench management, player engagement, leadership, or other aspects of coaching.

The mentorship relationship should remain flexible and responsive to the needs of each participant.

6.4 Ongoing Mentorship

Throughout the season, mentors will provide support through a combination of:

- Practice observation and on-ice assistance.
- Game observation and feedback.
- Practice planning discussions.
- Coaching strategy and player development conversations.
- Telephone or email communication.
- Informal meetings and coaching discussions.

Mentorship activities will be coordinated based on individual needs and availability.

6.5 Program Review

At the conclusion of the pilot season, BVHS will gather feedback from mentors and mentees to assess the program's effectiveness.

This information will help guide improvements and determine the program's future direction.

7. Coach Mentee Development

The Coach Mentee component is intended to provide additional guidance and encouragement to BVHS coaches who wish to continue developing their coaching abilities.

Participation is not limited to first-year coaches. Any eligible BVHS coach who believes they would benefit from mentorship is encouraged to participate.

7.1 Mentorship Activities

Coach Mentors may attend practices or games to observe and provide supportive feedback.

Areas of discussion may include:

- Practice organization and preparation.
- Effective use of ice time.

- Skill development and teaching techniques.
- Player communication and engagement.
- Age-appropriate drills and instruction.
- Team management and bench organization.
- Creating positive learning environments.
- Supporting individual player development.

7.2 Constructive Feedback

Feedback will be provided in a respectful, collaborative, and development-focused manner.

Mentors will recognize what a coach is doing well while identifying practical opportunities for continued improvement.

The objective is not to criticize or evaluate coaches, but to support their growth and confidence.

The mentorship process will emphasize encouragement, reflection, and continuous learning rather than formal performance assessment.

8. U18 Junior Coach Development Program

A key component of the BVHS Coach Mentorship Program is creating opportunities for U18 players to become involved in coaching.

This initiative recognizes that today's players have the potential to become tomorrow's coaches, volunteers, and community leaders.

By introducing U18 players to coaching in a structured and supportive environment, BVHS hopes to inspire continued involvement in hockey beyond their playing years.

8.1 Eligibility

The program is open to interested BVHS U18 players who demonstrate a willingness to learn, a positive attitude, and a commitment to supporting younger players.

Participation will be voluntary and subject to program availability, required approvals, and applicable coaching eligibility requirements.

8.2 Junior Coach Responsibilities

Participating U18 players will be paired with a Coach Mentor and assigned to a younger BVHS team.

Junior Coaches will be expected to:

- Attend a minimum of **30% of their assigned team's practices and/or games** throughout the season.

- Demonstrate reliability, commitment, and professionalism.
- Support the team's coaching staff during approved activities.
- Assist with drills and player skill development.
- Promote positive attitudes, teamwork, respect, and sportsmanship.
- Serve as positive role models for younger players.
- Follow all applicable BVHS policies and coaching requirements.

Participation schedules will be developed in consultation with the Coach Mentor and the assigned team's coaching staff.

8.3 Coaching Certification

Prior to participating in on-ice coaching activities, U18 Junior Coaches must complete the applicable Shift Forward Coach/Team Official Certification.

Completion of the required training and approvals will be confirmed before Junior Coaches begin their assigned coaching duties.

8.4 On-Ice Participation

Once all required training, registration, and approvals have been completed, Junior Coaches may assist with practices under the supervision of the team's coaching staff.

Their involvement may include demonstrating drills, assisting with skill stations, encouraging players, and supporting the overall practice environment.

Junior Coaches will not be expected to independently manage or supervise a team.

8.5 Game-Day Participation

Junior Coaches may be provided opportunities to assist on the bench during games. This will be done at the discretion of the Coach Mentor.

BVHS will ensure that eligible Junior Coaches are appropriately registered or rostered before participating in any authorized game-day role.

The Coach Mentor and team coaching staff will coordinate game attendance and bench assignments.

8.6 Junior Coach Development Outcomes

Through participation, BVHS hopes Junior Coaches will develop:

- Leadership and communication skills.
- Confidence and personal responsibility.

- An understanding of coaching and player development.
- Positive relationships with younger players.
- An appreciation for teamwork and volunteerism.
- A desire to remain involved in hockey as future coaches.

The program is intended to be educational, enjoyable, and rewarding while complementing each participant's existing hockey commitments.

9. Coach Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

Coach Mentors are central to the success of the program.

BVHS is seeking experienced coaches who are passionate about developing players, supporting fellow coaches, and contributing to the long-term success of the Society.

9.1 Position Overview

Position: Coach Mentor (Volunteer)

Organization: Bow Valley Hockey Society

Reports to: BVHS Manager, Development

Program Term: 2026–2027 Hockey Season

9.2 Primary Responsibilities

Coach Mentors will:

1. Promote the Coach Mentorship Program and its benefits throughout BVHS.
2. Provide guidance, encouragement, and practical support to assigned mentees.
3. Be reasonably available through email, telephone, or in-person discussions.
4. Attend practices and/or games when mutually arranged.
5. Share coaching knowledge, practice planning strategies, and development resources.
6. Provide constructive feedback that recognizes strengths and encourages improvement.
7. Support U18 Junior Coaches in understanding their roles and responsibilities.
8. Work collaboratively with the Director of Coaching and Player Development.
9. Participate in mentorship meetings, workshops, or program discussions when available.
10. Provide feedback to help evaluate and improve the program.

9.3 Preferred Qualifications

BVHS Coach Mentors should ideally possess:

- Several years of hockey coaching, instruction, or relevant playing experience.
- Coaching certification in one or more recognized levels.
- Participation in coaching clinics, seminars, or educational workshops.
- Familiarity with Hockey Calgary, Hockey Alberta, and Hockey Canada coaching expectations.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- A positive, patient, and supportive leadership style.
- A commitment to player development and BVHS values.

Previous participation in coach mentorship training programs is considered an asset.

9.4 Essential Skills

Successful mentors will demonstrate strong abilities in communication, collaboration, leadership, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and coaching instruction.

Most importantly, mentors must demonstrate a genuine willingness to help others succeed.

10. Coach Mentorship Program Coordinator

10.1 Position Overview

Position: Coach Mentorship Program Coordinator

Designated Role: BVHS Manager, Development

Organization: Bow Valley Hockey Society

The Coach Mentorship Program Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of the BVHS Coach Mentorship Program.

This position provides leadership and administrative support to ensure that mentors and mentees receive a positive, organized, and beneficial experience.

10.2 Key Responsibilities

The Program Coordinator (BVHS Manager, Development) will:

1. Oversee the overall administration of the Coach Mentorship Program.
2. Promote participation among BVHS coaches and U18 players.
3. Recruit and coordinate volunteer Coach Mentors.

4. Review registrations and establish appropriate mentor–mentee pairings.
5. Maintain communication with program participants.
6. Provide information regarding coaching clinics, certifications, and development opportunities.
7. Coordinate mentor orientation sessions, workshops, and meetings.
8. Support mentors in addressing questions or challenges.
9. Monitor program participation and engagement.
10. Collect and review participant feedback.
11. Recommend program improvements to BVHS leadership.
12. Provide a summary of pilot-season outcomes to the BVHS Board of Directors.

10.3 Preferred Qualifications

The Program Coordinator should ideally possess coaching experience, familiarity with hockey certification requirements, and knowledge of Hockey Calgary, Hockey Alberta, and Hockey Canada coaching programs.

Experience in program planning, event coordination, volunteer management, and program evaluation is beneficial.

10.4 Essential Skills

The position requires strong organizational, communication, leadership, collaboration, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.

The Program Coordinator should demonstrate a commitment to coach development and the long-term success of BVHS.

11. Program Goals and Performance Measures

BVHS will establish measurable goals to assess the success of the 2026–2027 pilot program and support future growth.

Goal 1: Increase Participation in Coach Mentorship

Objective: Recruit a minimum of five Coach Mentees and five U18 Player Mentees during the pilot season, supported by a suitable number of qualified Coach Mentors.

Key Initiatives:

- Promote the program through BVHS email communications and social media.
- Provide information to current coaches and U18 families.

- Encourage experienced coaches to volunteer as mentors.
- Highlight the benefits of coaching development and leadership opportunities.
- Track participant registrations and program engagement.

Measure of Success: Achieve a minimum of 10 mentee participants during the 2026–2027 pilot season, subject to sufficient mentor availability.

Goal 2: Provide Meaningful Mentorship Opportunities

Objective: Establish supportive mentor–mentee relationships that encourage coaching development and continued learning.

Key Initiatives:

- Match participating mentees with appropriate mentors.
- Encourage regular communication throughout the season.
- Facilitate practice and game observations.
- Provide opportunities for constructive feedback.
- Encourage participants to identify personal development goals.

Measure of Success: Obtain participant feedback demonstrating that mentorship opportunities were beneficial and supported individual development.

Goal 3: Support U18 Leadership Development

Objective: Introduce U18 players to coaching through supervised, practical experience.

Key Initiatives:

- Recruit interested U18 players.
- Support completion of required coaching certification.
- Assign participants to appropriate teams.
- Establish attendance schedules and participation expectations.
- Encourage continued coaching involvement in future seasons.

Measure of Success: Track Junior Coach participation, completion of required training, attendance, and interest in future coaching opportunities.

Goal 4: Provide Mentor Education and Collaboration Opportunities

Objective: Offer opportunities for mentors and mentees to exchange ideas, share experiences, and strengthen coaching relationships.

Key Initiatives:

- Organize a Coach Mentor orientation or training session.
- Encourage informal mentor–mentee meetings.
- Explore mentorship workshops or informal discussion evenings.
- Facilitate discussions regarding coaching challenges and best practices.

Measure of Success: Deliver at least one organized mentor education or networking opportunity during the pilot season.

Goal 5: Evaluate and Improve the Program

Objective: Establish a process for gathering feedback and making continuous improvements.

Key Initiatives:

- Collect feedback from mentors and mentees.
- Review program participation and engagement.
- Identify challenges and opportunities for improvement.
- Discuss findings with BVHS leadership.
- Develop recommendations for the following season.

Measure of Success: Complete a year-end program evaluation and present recommendations to the BVHS Board of Directors.

12. Mentor Education and Development Opportunities

BVHS recognizes that mentorship is most effective when mentors themselves are supported and encouraged to continue learning.

During the pilot season, BVHS will aim to provide opportunities for Coach Mentors and mentees to connect outside of regular team activities.

These may include:

Coach Mentor Orientation

An introductory session outlining program objectives, expectations, communication practices, and mentorship approaches.

Coaching Development Workshops

Informal educational sessions focused on topics such as practice planning, player development, communication, and effective coaching techniques.

Mentor Networking Evenings

Informal gatherings or discussion evenings that allow mentors and mentees to share experiences, exchange ideas, and strengthen relationships.

Program Feedback Sessions

Opportunities for participants to provide feedback directly to the BV BVHS Manager, Development and contribute to the program's ongoing development.

BVHS will explore opportunities to collaborate with Hockey Calgary, Hockey Alberta, and Hockey Canada where appropriate.

13. Program Communication and Promotion

Effective communication will be essential to building awareness and encouraging participation.

BVHS will promote the Coach Mentorship Program through established Society communication channels, including:

- BVHS website announcements.
- Email communications to coaches and families.
- BVHS social media platforms.
- U18 team and parent communications.
- Coach meetings and development sessions.
- Direct outreach to experienced coaches.

Where appropriate, BVHS may also explore opportunities to promote mentorship initiatives through Hockey Calgary and other hockey development partners.

Communication materials will emphasize the program's development-first philosophy, the benefits of mentorship, and the opportunities available to both experienced and aspiring coaches.

14. BVHS Expectations of Program Participants

All participants are expected to represent the Bow Valley Hockey Society positively and uphold its values.

14.1 Expectations of Coach Mentors

BVHS Coach Mentors are expected to:

1. Be reasonably available to support their assigned mentees throughout the season.
2. Demonstrate professionalism, respect, and positive leadership.
3. Follow BVHS policies and applicable governing-body requirements.

4. Maintain a development-first approach to mentorship.
5. Provide constructive, respectful, and encouraging feedback.
6. Support a safe, inclusive, and positive hockey environment.
7. Communicate openly with mentees and the BVHS Manager, Development.
8. Demonstrate a genuine commitment to the development of coaches and players.

14.2 Expectations of Coach Mentees

Coach Mentees are expected to:

1. Demonstrate a willingness to learn and improve.
2. Participate actively in the mentorship relationship.
3. Communicate openly and respectfully with their assigned mentor.
4. Be receptive to constructive feedback.
5. Apply appropriate learning opportunities within their coaching environment.
6. Uphold BVHS policies and values.

14.3 Expectations of U18 Junior Coaches

U18 Junior Coaches are expected to:

1. Complete all required training and certification before beginning coaching duties.
2. Attend a minimum of 30% of assigned team practices and/or games.
3. Follow the direction of their Coach Mentor and authorized team coaching staff.
4. Demonstrate reliability, respect, and a positive attitude.
5. Serve as appropriate role models for younger players.
6. Follow all applicable safety, conduct, and supervision requirements.
7. Approach the experience as an opportunity to learn, develop, and contribute.

15. Safety, Conduct, and Compliance

The safety and well-being of all participants will remain a priority throughout the Coach Mentorship Program.

All mentors, Coach Mentees, and U18 Junior Coaches must comply with applicable BVHS policies and the requirements of Hockey Calgary, Hockey Alberta, and Hockey Canada.

These requirements may include appropriate registration, coaching qualifications, screening, safeguarding training, supervision, and team official eligibility.

BVHS Manager, Development. will work with BVHS Registrar to confirm applicable requirements before participants undertake coaching responsibilities.

U18 Junior Coaches must operate under appropriate adult supervision and may only perform duties authorized for their age, training, and registration status.

Participation in the Coach Mentorship Program does not replace or override any mandatory coaching certification, screening, safety, or governing-body requirements.

16. Pilot Program Evaluation

At the conclusion of the 2026–2027 hockey season, BVHS will conduct a review of the Coach Mentorship Program.

The evaluation will focus on participation, engagement, participant satisfaction, and opportunities for future improvement.

Evaluation Areas

Participation

Number of Coach Mentors, Coach Mentees, and U18 Junior Coaches registered in the program.

Engagement

Level of mentor–mentee interaction, practice and game participation, and involvement in development activities.

Participant Experience

Feedback regarding the quality of mentorship, communication, program organization, and perceived development benefits.

U18 Development

Completion of required training, participation in coaching activities, and interest in continued coaching involvement.

Program Improvement

Identification of successful program components, challenges, and recommendations for future seasons.

BVHS Manager, Development. will summarize the findings and provide recommendations to the BVHS Board of Directors.

The evaluation will help determine whether the program should continue, expand, or be modified for the 2027–2028 hockey season.

17. Registration and Next Steps

BVHS encourages experienced coaches, developing coaches, and interested U18 players to become involved in the 2026–2027 Coach Mentorship Program.

Become a Coach Mentor

Experienced BVHS coaches who are passionate about developing others are encouraged to volunteer as Coach Mentors.

This is an opportunity to share valuable hockey knowledge, support fellow coaches, and make a meaningful contribution to the future of the Society.

Coach Mentor Registration: [Registration Link]

Become a Coach Mentee

BVHS coaches who are new to coaching or interested in further developing their skills are encouraged to register.

Whether you are looking for guidance in practice planning, player development, communication, or general coaching confidence, the program offers an opportunity to learn from experienced coaches.

Coach Mentee Registration: [Registration Link]

Become a U18 Junior Coach

BVHS U18 players interested in leadership, coaching, and giving back to the game are encouraged to participate.

The Junior Coach experience provides an opportunity to learn new skills, work with younger players, and explore future involvement in hockey.

U18 Junior Coach Registration: [Registration Link]

Additional program details, registration deadlines, and participant information will be communicated by BVHS prior to the start of the 2026–2027 season.

18. Our Commitment to Coach Development

The Bow Valley Hockey Society believes that investing in coaches is an investment in the future of our players and our hockey community.

Through the Coach Mentorship Program, BVHS aims to create an environment where coaches feel supported, experienced volunteers feel valued, and young players are inspired to become future leaders. The program is not about creating perfect coaches. It is about creating opportunities for individuals to learn, grow, share experiences, and develop the confidence to make a positive difference. By working together, BVHS can strengthen its coaching community, enhance the hockey experience for players, and build a lasting culture of mentorship and development.

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