

## **Coaches and coaching - A brief guide for clubs and players.**

### **What is a coach?**

A tennis coach in the UK is someone who is trained by a Coach Education Centre approved by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to deliver tennis coaching sessions to people who want to improve or learn the game of tennis. Tennis coaching is a rewarding career as you inspire people to start playing the game and empower them to become as good as they can and to fulfil their potential. Every day is a new challenge, from working with young children picking up a racket for the first time through to working with elite players seeking to get their first ranking points and start on their professional careers right through to chasing grand slam success.

### **What do they do?**

Tennis coaches have varying roles and responsibilities dependant on what setting they work in and whether they are a head coach, lead coach or assistant coach. Ultimately tennis coaches are there to promote the game of tennis, enthuse players to play and help them get better at the game. Head coaches may manage a team of coaches and run large coaching programmes for people of all ages and abilities. They will be working in clubs that may be corporate companies (eg David Lloyd), member clubs run professionally with paid staff and also volunteer led smaller clubs. Tennis coaching is not just on court delivery of lessons but also a lot of administration tasks are also required such as diary management, lesson planning, booking systems, emails & social media management. Coaches are typically self-starters and motivators as well as being well organised and good time managers.

High performance coaches work with small numbers of players planning their tennis training competition and conditioning programmes.



### **How are they employed?**

Over 80% of tennis coaches in the UK are self-employed with only the 20% balance being directly employed. Some Head coaches may still receive a retainer for the work they do at

their club but these are now few and far between. Self-employment brings with it the rewards of freedom to manage and develop your own business as you want to but, as recent experience has shown can also leave you exposed when difficulties in the economy occur.

### **How do I recruit a good quality coach for myself or for my club?**

The LTA website allows all member clubs to advertise coaching vacancies for free which is the main place coaches look for new roles. <https://www.lta.org.uk/workforce-venues/coach-teach/tennis-coaching-jobs/> has all details with a template and how to post a job.

All coaches working in clubs in the UK should be accredited with the LTA. This ensures that coaches are qualified, First Aid trained, DBS checked & Safeguarding trained. To be a registered club with the LTA from October, all coaches working in your clubs that are level 2 and above must be LTA accredited. For more information on this go to - <https://www.lta.org.uk/workforce-venues/coach-teach/tennis-coach-accreditation/>

If you are looking for a personal coach, your best bet is to go first to the coach working at your own club. This way you can be sure that they will be LTA accredited. If you aren't sure what you want to ask, just have a general conversation with the coach about your game and what you are trying to achieve and they will be happy to work up a programme with you to suit you personally.

Many clubs and coaches also run group coaching sessions, where you can work with other players of a similar standard and turn your coaching session into a social occasion as well.

### **What should I be paying for a coach?**

Typically for an average club player wanting to develop their game you would expect to be paying between £25-£35 per hour for one to one coaching, depending on the level of the coach you are working with. Group coaching sessions are a way of spreading this cost with others.



## Are coaching companies a good idea?

Coaching companies may help your club fill a coaching vacancy. These companies are professionally run and have experience in growing programmes and helping attract members. As tennis clubs, you need to ensure you are getting good value from a coaching company, are you seeing enough income for them using your courts and having access to your membership as these are both valuable resources you have as a club.

Here is a useful guide from the LTA regarding recruiting a coach and what you should be looking for -

<https://www3.lta.org.uk/NewWebsite/LTA/Documents/Coaches%20and%20coaching%20assistants/Information%20on%20what%20to%20look%20for%20in%20a%20Coach.pdf>

## What are the pros and cons of different arrangements?

Some clubs decide to employ a coach to run the coaching programme and the club then keep any coaching profits (or losses). Other clubs have coaches hire their facilities and the coach can then run their own business from there (under your club rules). The first agreement gives the coach more stability but doesn't motivate them to fill programmes and find new clients. When coaches are able to run their own coaching businesses off your courts (you should always charge a facility hire) it means the risk is with the coach, and they will be motivated to ensure sessions are filled in order to make money. Ultimately having a coaching programme should be a huge positive to the club, bringing in new members, generating income for the club and organising an attractive and well run programme that works for your facility. Clubs, committees and coaches need to work together to ensure everyone is benefitting from the relationship.



## Is a performance coach different to a normal coach?

Performance coaches usually work with much fewer numbers of players but spend more time with performance players than a development coach would. Development coaches would coach many more children in a week but for less time. The LTA coaching pathway has different qualifications for Performance and development coaches. Both coaches are equally as important to tennis and both as skilled, just in different areas.

LEVEL	QUALIFICATION		ACCREDITATION
5	LTA LEVEL 5 MASTER CLUB COACH	LTA LEVEL 5 MASTER PERFORMANCE COACH	
4	LTA LEVEL 4 SENIOR CLUB COACH	LTA LEVEL 4 SENIOR PERFORMANCE COACH	
3	LTA LEVEL 3 COACH		
2	LTA LEVEL 2 COACHING ASSISTANT		
1	LTA LEVEL 1 COACHING ASSISTANT		