

STATE-WIDE SURVEY OF INDIANA COACHES



Bates, S., Anderson-Butcher, D., Nothnagle, E., Ault-Baker, K., Reynolds, J., Blom, L., & Elam, N. (2026). *State-wide survey of Indiana sport coaches*. The LiFEsports Initiative, Columbus, OH.

LiFEsports™
at The Ohio State University®



For more information, email: coachbeyondindiana@gmail.com

Coach Beyond...



Introduction and Background

In fall 2021, LiFEsports at The Ohio State University (OSU) and the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) were awarded a grant as part of the “Million Coaches Challenge” funded by the Susan Crown Exchange. The Million Coaches Challenge sought to train one million coaches in social-emotional learning and positive youth development (SEL-PYD) practices by 2025 and achieved this goal in collaboration with 17 national partners. Of note, the Susan Crown Exchange seeks to bring partner organizations together to build a future where our kids know how to work together, celebrate success, manage failure, and are equipped with the skills they need to thrive. LiFEsports, OHSAA, partner school districts, and youth sport organizations were proud to be a part of this work and named our collective work in Ohio “Coach Beyond.”

In 2024, the Susan Crown Exchange provided funding to replicate the Ohio model of Coach Beyond in Kansas, Indiana, and Maryland. We partnered with leaders at Ball State University as our Coach Beyond Indiana partners. One step in building capacity for states was understanding their coaches' training needs and interests. As such, each state conducted a state-wide needs assessment (e.g., a state-wide survey of sport coaches). To see each state report, please visit: [Connect With Your State Contact » OSU LiFEsports](#)



State-Wide Survey of Indiana Sport Coaches

Leaders at OSU LiFEsports developed a state-wide coaching survey in 2022 to assess coaches' backgrounds, experiences, philosophies, behaviors, training interests, and training histories. Guided by this initial work in Ohio, leaders in Indiana selected items for their needs assessment. This report presents the results of the Indiana state-wide survey conducted in the fall of 2024. To summarize findings, we first present the study methods. Next, we present the demographics of Indiana coaches who completed the survey, followed by an overview of their coaching behaviors, training histories, and interests, top coaching philosophies, and perceived needs in their schools and communities.

Method

The OSU Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures. Participants were recruited via social media and emails sent to contacts on a comprehensive list of coaches from for-profit and non-profit sectors (e.g., club teams, private schools, clubs, associations, and other sport entities such as parks and recreation agencies). Furthermore, we recruited leaders and athletic

directors from partner districts in Indiana to share the survey with their fellow coaches. Participants provided informed consent before completing the survey.



Coach Demographics

In total, 359 Indiana coaches participated in this survey. Most coaches had over ten years of coaching experience, were between 30 and 49 years old, and identified as White and male. Importantly, demographic questions were optional to allow respondents to maintain anonymity. The following tables provide an overview of the characteristics of the respondents in our study.

Characteristics	%	
Years Coached		56% had over 10 years of coaching experience
Less than 5 years	22%	
6 - 10 years	22%	
11 - 20 years	31%	
21+ years	25%	
Age		The majority were between the ages of 30 - 49
Under 30	16%	
30 - 39	26%	
40 - 49	32%	
50 - 59	17%	
60 or older	9%	
Race		A majority identified as White and male
White	95%	
Black	1%	
Hispanic/Latino	2%	
Multiple Races	<1%	
AAPI	<1%	
Prefer not to answer	<1%	
Gender		
Male	67%	
Female	33%	
Other	<1%	

Role Last Season, Primary Setting, & School Characteristics

Role	%	Primary Setting	%	School As Primary Setting			
				School Level	%	School Type	%
Head Coach	70%	School	88%	Elementary	2%	Public	92%
Assistant	26%	Competitive	9%	Middle school	10%	Private	7%
Volunteer	3%	Other	1%	High school	87%	Charter	<1%
Other	3%	Developmental (8 years or younger)	<1%	Other	2%	Other	<1%
		Adapted	<1%				
		Collegiate	<1%				
		Recreational	<1%				

Relationship with School (Of those who reported coaching in the school setting $n = 306$)

Role	%
Teacher Educator	48%
School Staff Member	16%
Parent of Student	14%
Community Member	17%
Athletic Director	8%
Other	7%
Volunteer	6%
School Admin	6%
Extended Family Member of Student	3%

1/2 of school-based coaches reported they were teacher-educators or school staff

Hours and Pay

Weekly Hours Spent Coaching	%	Pay (Last Season)	%
1-10 hours	11%	Unpaid	8%
11-20 hours	54%	Less than \$999	5%
21-30 hours	23%	\$1,000 - \$4,999	58%
31-40 hours	8%	\$5,000 - \$9,999	25%
41+ hours	4%	\$10,000 or more	3%

Educational Background

Degree	%	Degree	%
High school graduate	9%	Master's degree	42%
Associate degree	7%	Professional or doctoral degree	2%
Undergraduate degree	39%	Other	1%

Sport By Primary Setting

Sport	% of Overall Sample	Primary Setting Where Coached Sport	
		School	Community
Baseball	12%	78%	22%
Basketball	15%	100%	--
Bowling	<1%	--	100%
Cheer	5%	100%	--
Cross Country	3%	90%	10%
Football	12%	95%	5%
Golf	4%	86%	14%
Gymnastics	1%	100%	--
Ice Hockey	<1%	100%	--
Lacrosse	<1%	100%	--
Soccer	10%	81%	19%
Softball	8%	92%	8%
Swimming and Diving	4%	57%	43%
Track & Field	7%	95%	5%
Tennis	3%	100%	--
Volleyball	11%	90%	10%
Wrestling	4%	100%	--
Other	1%	60%	14%

*Note. Some coaches reported coaching more than one sport, resulting in %'s exceeding 100%. Community represents those who reported coaching in competitive, recreational, developmental, or other settings.

Sport By Gender

Sport	% of Overall Sample	Gender of Team Coached Last Season			
		Male	Female	Equally Male & Female	Co-Ed
Baseball	12%	100%	--	--	--
Basketball	15%	45%	55%	--	--
Bowling	<1%	--	--	100%	--
Cheer	5%	--	92%	--	8%
Cross Country	3%	40%	40%	--	20%
Football	12%	100%	--	--	--
Golf	4%	50%	33%	17%	--
Gymnastics	1%	--	100%	--	--
Ice Hockey	<1%	100%	--	--	--
Soccer	10%	30%	65%	--	4%
Softball	8%	--	100%	--	--
Swimming and Diving	4%	10%	--	20%	70%
Track & Field	7%	20%	15%	15%	50%
Tennis	3%	63%	25%	12%	--
Volleyball	11%	--	95%	5%	--
Wrestling	4%	50%	10%	--	40%
Other	1%	20%	40%	40%	--

Primary Setting - School: Top 5 School Districts Completing Survey

School District	Total Participants	% of Total Sample
Yorktown Community Schools	24	8%
Rossville Con School District	15	5%
New Palestine Community Schools	14	4%
Blue River Valley Schools	9	3%
Crawfordsville Community Schools	8	3%

To see the full school district breakdown,
see Appendix A.



COACHING BEHAVIORS



All coaches were asked about their ability to engage in various coaching behaviors that support the whole athlete in and out of sport. Items were measured on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items that generated the highest and lowest percentages of coaches reporting they felt confident in their ability to engage in each behavior are reported below, as indicated by the percent who selected “agree” or “strongly agree.” Coaches were asked, “As a coach, how confident are you in your ability to...”

5 Least Confident Behaviors	5 Most Confident Behaviors
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reduce performance anxiety among athletes2. Prepare appropriate plans for off-season physical conditioning3. Raise funds to support my team4. Identify off the field stressors among athletes5. Prevent burnout among athletes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Promote good sportsmanship2. Foster character development3. Instill an attitude of respect for others among athletes4. Teach basic technique/strategy5. Teach life skills through sport

Indiana coaches reported feeling confident in their ability to promote good sportsmanship and teach the X's and O's, yet were less confident on topics related to mental wellness.

Coaching Behaviors (As a coach, I am confident in my ability to...)

Category	% Strongly Agreed	Category	% Strongly Agreed
Coaching the X's and O's			
teach basic technique/strategy.	56%	maximize team strengths during competitions.	45%
teach technical skills.	43%	make strategic decisions in pressure situations.	43%
accurately assess the physical conditioning of athletes.	35%	prepare appropriate plans for off-season physical conditioning.	31%
coach sport-specific skills for different positions/events.	46%	implement appropriate endurance programs during the season.	31%
Teaching Life and Leadership Skills through Sport			
promote good sportsmanship.	70%	instill an attitude of respect for others among athletes.	63%
foster character development.	59%	teach life skills through sport.	65%
Coach Beyond... Behaviors			
work with parents/caregivers.	32%	help athletes regulate their emotions.	25%
identify off the field stressors among athletes.	24%	reduce performance anxiety among athletes.	22%
address mental health concerns.	27%	prevent burnout among athletes.	21%
manage stress and pressure as a coach.	32%	host a tryout.	49%
raise funds to support my team.	38%	communicate effectively with administrators.	55%
implement an end-of-the-season event.	49%		

Only 27% of Indiana coaches reported feeling confident in their ability to address mental health concerns.



TRAINING HISTORY & INTERESTS

All coaches were asked about past coaching training they had never participated in and their interest in future training topics. Below are the top 10 topics that generated the highest and lowest percentages regarding coaches' training histories. In addition, we overview the top 10 trainings coaches were interested in and those they reported having never participated in but had an interest in.

Top 5 Most Attended Training Topics (Have Participated In)	%	Top 5 Least Attended Training Topics (Never Participated In)	%
1. Sport Skills and Techniques	82%	1. Linkage and Referral to Resources	53%
2. Coaching Tactics and Strategy	77%	2. Trauma-Informed Practice	52%
3. Leadership Development	77%	3. Stress and Coaching	49%
4. Effective Communication	72%	4. Emotional Regulation	47%
5. Relationship-Building	66%	5. Diversity and Inclusion	47%

Beyond sport skills and strategy, Indiana coaches are interested in more training on leadership, team culture, performance anxiety, and mental health.

Top 10 Topics Coaches Are Interested In Additional Training	%	Top 10 Topics Coaches Are Interested In & Have Not Attended In Past	%
1. Coaching Tactics & Strategy	83%	1. Stress and Coaching	40%
2. Sport Skills and Techniques	81%	2. Performance Anxiety	38%
3. Leadership Development	81%	3. Trauma-Informed Practice	38%
4. Team Culture	80%	4. Emotional Regulation Linkage to Referral and Resources	37%
5. Performance Anxiety	78%	5. Mental Health	36%
6. Mental Health	78%	6. Linkage to Referral and Resources	35%
7. Life Skill Development through Sport	76%	7. Behavior Management	35%
8. Effective Communication	74%	8. Working with Parents/Caregivers	33%
9. Stress and Coaching	74%	9. Life Skill Development through Sport	33%
10. Emotional Regulation	72%	10. Team Culture	32%

To see all participation rates and interest levels, please see Appendix B.

Coaching Philosophies

Coaches were given a list of 12 different coaching philosophies and asked to rank them. Coaches' most and least important philosophies guiding their coaching practices are summarized below.

The most important coaching philosophy reported by Indiana coaches was helping athletes learn new life skills.

Most Important Coaching Philosophy	N	%
Helping athletes learn new life skills	129	45%
Least Important Coaching Philosophy	N	%
Making sure all athletes play	221	76%

Stress, Satisfaction, and Retention

Question	Full Sample	Setting		Experience/Role		Career Wins	
		School-Based	Comm-Based	1-5-year coaches	21+ Yrs	Win <50% Games	Win >50% Games
% Somewhat or Extremely							
How satisfying is the coaching experience?	98%	99%	94%	99%	100%	92%	99%
How stressful is the coaching experience?	82%	84%	75%	79%	78%	86%	82%
How likely are you to continue coaching?	90%	89%	97%	91%	85%	94%	89%

Career and Last Season Win Percentage

Estimate Over	Mean Win %	Won <50%	Won >50%
Career	65%	12%	88%
Last Season	62%	25%	75%

82% of Indiana coaches reported coaching is somewhat or extremely stressful.

Impact on Athletes

Coaches were asked on a scale of 0-100, “How much of an impact have you had on your athletes...”

Question	% Low Impact (0-33)	% Moderate Impact (34-67)	% High Impact (68-100)
Development of life skills	1%	13%	86%
Overall well-being	1%	14%	86%
Development of sport skills	<1%	14%	86%

Community Needs

Coaches were asked to indicate “to what degree did you have enough of the following resources during your LAST SEASON when coaching your PRIMARY sport.” Items were measured on a scale of 0 – 100, with 0 = Extremely inadequate, 50 = Neither adequate nor inadequate, 100 = Extremely adequate.

Resource	Mean Score	% Indicating Need for More Resources (≤ 50)
Equipment	73	21%
Uniforms	82	12%
Facility Space	68	28%
Transportation to Games	86	9%
Funding for Other Team Needs	63	36%
Administrative Support	78	16%
Peer Support	78	15%
Safe Places to Practice	90	6%
Payment/Income to Coach	59	44%
Parent/Caregiver Support	75	15%

Coach Beyond...

Data from Indiana coaches align with several Coach Beyond training areas, and particularly showcase priorities related to mental health, performance anxiety, team culture, and stress/pressure.



More information about Coach Beyond trainings can be found here:

coachbeyond.osu.edu

Coach Beyond Training Topics	Indiana Coaches Data Summary
Interests in Additional Training	Coaching Behaviors
Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Health	78% were interested in additional training on mental health.
Improving Mental Strategies for Athletic Performance	78% were interested in additional training on performance anxiety.
Fostering a Positive Team Environment	80% were interested in additional training on team culture.
Developing Leaders	81% were interested in additional training on leadership development.
Promoting Life Skills in Your Student-Athletes	76% were interested in additional training on life skill development through sport.
Building a Community of Support	72% were interested in additional training on relationship-building.
Managing Stress & Pressure as Coaches	82% reported coaching is somewhat or extremely stressful.
Perfecting Practice: Quality, Balanced Coaching	83% were interested in additional training on coaching tactics and strategies.



SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

Summary

The coaching landscape in Indiana continues to evolve and change over time, and so too do the needs of student-athletes. The findings of this survey point to notable strengths among coaches in Indiana, including a strong commitment to continuing to support youth sports in the state. Results also identify opportunities to improve Indiana's coach education and training system in youth development, wellness, and managing team dynamics, events, and stakeholders (e.g., parents/caregivers). Findings reveal that a majority of those who completed the survey were teacher-educators coaching high school sports.

Overall, Indiana coaches reported feeling confident coaching the X's and O's (e.g., technique, skills, tactics) and teaching life skills through sport. For instance, Indiana coaches reported feeling confident promoting sportspersonship, teaching basic technique and strategy, and teaching life skills. However, coaches also reported feeling less confident engaging in behaviors that promote the holistic health of student-athletes (i.e., mental health, performance anxiety, linkage and referral to resources/supports) despite a high interest in these training practices. Namely, coaches demonstrated an interest in learning holistic coaching practices that help make the youth sport environment conducive to learning skills that extend beyond the field, mat, court, etc.

Let's Coach Beyond...

This report summarizes findings from the state-wide survey of 359 Indiana youth sport coaches. Overall, coaches demonstrate notable strengths and an interest in going "beyond the X's and O's."

Coach Beyond has developed online and in-person trainings to help meet the needs of your school, district, and community. Undoubtedly, Indiana leaders will use the results of this survey to inform how they want to support coaches and promote positive youth development through sport. Please visit our website to learn more: [Coach Beyond » OSU LiFEsports](#). We look forward to continuing our partnership with your state! To learn more, please email coachbeyondindiana@gmail.com.



Appendix A

School District Breakdowns

District	Total	%	District	Total	%
21 st Century Charter School of Gary	1	.3	Elkhart Community Schools	2	.6
Archdiocese of Indianapolis	2	.6	Elwood Community School Corp	2	.6
Baugo Community Schools	3	.9	Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp	8	2.5
Beech Grove City Schools	1	.3	Fort Wayne Community Schools	4	1.3
Blackford County Schools	1	.3	Franklin Community School Corp	1	.3
Blue River Valley Schools	9	2.8	Franklin County Community School Corp	1	.3
Brownsburg Community School Corp	1	.3	Franklin Township Community School Corp	1	.3
Burris Laboratory School	1	.3	Frankton-Lapel Community Schools	1	.3
Central Noble Community School Corp	1	.3	Greenfield-Central Community Schools	2	.6
Clarksville Community School Corp	1	.3	Griffith Public Schools	3	.9
Concord Community Schools	7	2.2	Hamilton Heights School Corp	4	1.3
Crawfordsville Community Schools	8	2.5	Indianapolis Public Schools	2	.6
Crown Point Community School Corp	6	1.9	John Glen School Corporation	4	1.3
Danville Community School Corp	1	.3	Kokomo School Corporation	1	.3
DeKalb Co Ctl United School District	5	1.6	Lake Central School Corporation	3	.9
Diocese of Evansville	2	.6	Lebanon Community School Corp	4	1.3
Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend	3	.9	Liberty-Perry Community School Corp	1	.3
Duneland School Corporation	4	1.3	Linton-Stockton School Corporation	1	.3
East Allen County Schools	1	.3	Logansport Community School Corp	2	.6
East Washington School Corp	2	.6	Madison-Grant United School Corp	7	2.2
Eastern Greene Schools	4	1.3	Manchester Community Schools	1	.3
Edinburgh Community School Corp	2	.6	Medora Community School Corp	1	.3

District	Total	%	District	Total	%
Merrillville Community School Corp	1	.3	School Town of Speedway	1	.3
Middlebury Community Schools	1	.3	Scott County School District 1	1	.3
MSD Bluffton-Harrison	5	1.6	Shenandoah School Corporation	2	.6
MSD Mount Vernon	1	.3	Smith-Green Community Schools	1	.3
MSD Wabash County Schools	3	.9	South Bend Community School Corp	6	1.9
MSD Wayne Township	1	.3	South Central Com School Corp	5	1.6
Muncie Community Schools	4	1.3	South Montgomery Com School Corp	1	.3
New Palestine Community Schools	14	4.4	South Newton School Corp	7	2.2
New Prairie United School Corp	4	1.3	Southeast Dubois Co School Corp	7	2.2
Noblesville Schools	3	.9	Southern Wells Com Schools	3	.9
North Adams Community Schools	1	.3	Southside Sp Svrs of Marion Co	1	.3
Northwest Allen County Schools	2	.6	Spencer-Owen Community Schools	7	2.2
Northwestern Con School Corp	1	.3	Springs Valley Com School Corp	7	2.2
Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp	1	.3	Switzerland County School Corp	2	.6
Pioneer Regional School Corp	6	1.9	Tindley Genesis Academy	1	.3
Plainfield Community School Corp	1	.3	Tippecanoe School Corp	2	.6
Plymouth Community School Corp	3	.9	Vigo County School Corp	1	.3
Randolph Central School Corp	4	1.3	Wabash City Schools	6	1.9
Richland-Bean Blossom C S C	1	.3	Warrick County School Corp	2	.6
Rossville Con School District	15	4.7	Wes-Del Community Schools	1	.3
Rush County Schools	7	2.2	Westfield-Washington Schools	1	.3
Salem County Schools	4	1.3	Yorktown Community Schools	24	7.6
School City of Hammond	1	.3	Other	16	5.1
School Town of Highland	4	1.3			

Appendix B

Training Backgrounds and Interests

Training Topic	% Never Participated & Not Interested in Additional Training	% Never Participated & Interested in Additional Training	% Have Participated & Not Interested in Additional Training	% Have Participated & Interested in Additional Training
Sport Skills and Techniques	2%	16%	17%	65%
Coaching Tactics and Strategy	3%	21%	15%	62%
Leadership Development	5%	19%	15%	62%
Effective Communication	7%	21%	19%	53%
Team Culture	5%	32%	15%	48%
Life Skill Development through Sport	6%	33%	18%	43%
Mental Health	6%	30%	17%	48%
Relationship-Building	6%	28%	22%	44%
Working with Parents and Caregivers	12%	33%	22%	33%
Performance Anxiety	7%	38%	15%	40%
Behavior Management	9%	35%	22%	35%

Training Topic	% Never Participated & Not Interested in Additional Training	% Never Participated & Interested in Additional Training	% Have Participated & Not Interested in Additional Training	% Have Participated & Interested in Additional Training
Conflict Resolution	8%	30%	22%	40%
Emotional Regulation	10%	37%	18%	36%
Diversity and Inclusion	17%	30%	27%	26%
Linkage and Referral to Resources	18%	35%	22%	26%
Trauma-Informed Practice	14%	38%	19%	30%
Stress and Coaching	9%	40%	17%	34%

To cite this report, please use the following reference:

Bates, S., Anderson-Butcher, D., Nothnagle, E., Ault-Baker, K., Reynolds, J., Blom, L., & Elam, N. (2026). *State-wide survey of Indiana sport coaches*. The LiFEsports Initiative, Columbus, OH.