



YOUTH & HIGH SCHOOL WOMEN COACHES ACADEMY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WeCOACH to Host Youth & High School Women Coaches Academy Class #6

August 19, 2026 – WeCOACH will host its sixth annual Youth & High School Women Coaches Academy on August 22, 2026. Established in 2021, this dynamic virtual leadership program, inspired by the premier WeCOACH-NCAA Women Coaches Academy, welcomes youth, club, middle and high school women coaches from all sports.

Through a blend of expert-led workshops, interactive peer-to-peer learning, and collaborative discussions, the Academy advances holistic coaching by building leadership skills and strategies that drive personal growth and professional success. Participants engage in an inclusive environment designed to foster connection and community across the sports landscape.

Class #6 will welcome coaches representing 17 sports across 20 different states. The 2026 Academy will feature engaging sessions on topics including building team culture by fostering internal motivation and connection, discovering your coaching values, navigating aspects of coaching that are rarely taught, exploring the intersection of mindset training and athlete mental well-being, and learning from a panel featuring experienced coaches.

"When we invest in youth and high school coaches, we strengthen the future of the entire coaching profession. At every level of sport, professional development is essential to empowering coaches with the knowledge, confidence, and tools they need to lead with purpose, build thriving team cultures, and positively impact the athletes they serve. The Youth & High School Women Coaches Academy is a catalyst for growth –

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bringing coaches together to sharpen their skills, build meaningful connections, and reignite their passion for the transformative work of coaching,” said Vanessa Fuchs, CEO of WeCOACH.

WeCOACH awarded over 38 scholarships to this year’s Academy participants thanks to generous funding from donors and partners. WeCOACH extends its sincere gratitude to BAND for its continued commitment and recognizes Academy partners BSN SPORTS, Hudl, NWALA, U.S. Club Soccer, and USA Weightlifting for their partnership in making this program possible and expanding opportunities for women coaches nationwide.

2026 Youth & High School Women Coaches Academy Class #6 Participants:

Sue Abatemarco - Ranney School, Assistant Coach, Basketball
Chloe Allen - Fondy Weightlifting, Head Coach, Weightlifting
Melisa Ayisigi-Vann - LA City United, ACFC Coaching Network, Head Coach, Soccer
Amber Baehr - Johnson County Central, Head Coach, Cheer & Track & Field
Cari Barrett - White County High School, Head Coach, Softball
Cassandra Barry - CCV Stars FC, Head Coach, Soccer
Gwenna Bradley - Underground PDX, Director, Weightlifting
Jada Davis - Atletico Dallas Youth, Head Coach, Soccer
Blanca De Lasse - Hopkinton High School, Head Coach Junior Varsity, Tennis, Swimming
Margo Flack - Cardinal Gibbons High School, Associate Athletic Director, Soccer
Jolene Fugate - West Catholic Athletic League, Director of Athletics
Megan Gayman - Holy Names Academy, Head Coach, Cross Country
Kerri Goodrich - Performance Initiatives, Director of Operations, Weightlifting
Kaylee Grieser - Sporting Nebraska FC, Head Coach, Soccer
Nour Gueblaoui - Western Illinois University, Student-Athlete, Tennis
Deborah Haba - Poolesville High School, Head Coach Junior Varsity, Lacrosse
LaVina Hamilton - Walther Christian Academy & Four Point Play, Assistant Coach, Basketball
Mary Henderson - City of Orlando, Director of Athletics, Cheer
Roshawna Holmes - Performance Initiatives, Assistant Coach, Weightlifting
Christine Hosoda - Lowell High School, Director of Athletics
Megan Larson - Minneapolis United Soccer Club, Head Coach, Soccer
Tiffani Lee - USAW, Strength Coach, Weightlifting
Jenny Lutkins - Anchor Weightlifting, Head Coach, Weightlifting
Meg McCue-Jones - Charleston Soccer Club, Director, Soccer
Meredith Morgan - Long Trail School, Assistant Coach, Soccer
Amy Mulvihill - Tennis Austin, Director, Tennis
Natsuki Murakami - Western Colorado University, Student-Athlete, Soccer
Carissa Nielsen - Lakes Area Composite, Co-Head Coach, Mountain Biking
Kaleigh Ottwright - Barnegat High School, Assistant Coach, Flag Football
Katrina Parker - Head Coach, Soccer
Jen Pashley - Bay Area Disc Association, Head Coach, Ultimate

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Halea Picha - St. Paul Central Girls High School, Head Coach Junior Varsity, Soccer
Marissa Pitrone - Mount Saint Charles Academy, Head Coach, Tennis
Phyllis Porter - In Search of A New Beginning, Inc, Head Coach, Bowling
Elena Ramirez - Colegio Marista Guaynabo, PR, Assistant Coach, Tennis
Margo Rettig - Ralston Valley High School, Assistant Coach, Tennis
Linnea Schultz - Riverside Brookfield High School, Assistant Coach, Lacrosse
Faye Stevens - Westinghouse College Prep, Head Coach, Cheer
Tonia Stinson – Tri-City Dolphins, Assistant Coach, Baseball, Football, Softball
Val Swan - Youth Tennis Advantage, Director, Tennis
Michelle Timothy - CWTA, Assistant Coach, Tennis
Lauren Van Gheem - Green Bay YMCA, Volunteer Assistant Coach, Gymnastics
Brittany VanDuker - Mountain View HS Girls Basketball, Head Coach, Basketball
Sonia VanGilder - Fort Worth Eastern Hills, Other, Volleyball
Melissa VanGorden - Royal Oak High School, Head Coach, Soccer
Marissa Villegas - Highline Premier Football Club, Director, Soccer
Judy A. Ward - Little Rock Southwest High School, Assistant Coach, Tennis
Ebony Williams - Arlington Heights, Assistant Coach, Basketball

To learn more about the Youth & High School Women Coaches Academy, please visit:
<https://wecoachsports.org/programs-events/hs-academy/>.

ABOUT WeCOACH

Founded in 2011, WeCOACH is a one-of-a-kind 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to recruiting, advancing, and retaining women coaches in all sports and levels through year-round professional growth & leadership development programs. Prior to Title IX, over 90% of women's collegiate sports teams were coached by women. Today, more than 50 years later, the data indicates that this number has decreased to 41% across all three NCAA Divisions, with only 7% of head coaches being women of color. Only 5% of women coach men's teams. At the youth level, the data is difficult to estimate, but approximately fewer than 20% of teams are coached by women. WeCOACH launched MOVE the NUMBERS in 2022 to help change the landscape for women coaches and the student-athletes they lead. If she can see her, she can be her. For more information visit [MOVE the NUMBERS](#).

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