

## **Athlete - Coach Transition Recommendations**

Athletes transitioning from one coach to another is a normal part of athletics and it is not uncommon for athletes to have more than one coach throughout their careers. More often than not the transition from one coach to another relates to differing coaching styles, the athlete requiring a more experienced coach, or a change of location (athlete or coach). Coaches may also wish to transition athletes to other coaches, having recognised that they have reached their coaching potential with that athlete.

Change can sometimes be stressful which can lead to miscommunication and relationship breakdowns. Leading this process with patience, open and honest communication by all parties is required to ensure that transitions occur without compromising the welfare of individuals and relationships.

### **The Athlete**

Athletes have a responsibility to communicate openly and honestly with their coach (coach a) when initiating change. Athletes should be clear and concise when articulating their reasons to transition.

If athletes initiate transitional conversations with another coach (coach b) it is recommended that:

- Ideally the athlete will speak with their current coach (a) in advance of approaching another coach (b). It is acknowledged that this is not always possible or realistic.
- The athlete engages in open and honest conversations between all parties.
- If possible, there should be transparency around the time frame in which new athlete/coach relationships commence.
- All parties should seek support from an appropriate support person or mediator if required. This support may be a family member, a member of the athletics community, or someone independent.
- Athletics New Zealand can provide high performance athletes with guidance around transitioning if required.
- High performance athletes eligible for Athlete Performance Support (APS) will have the ability to access support services if required.

### **The Coach**

Coaches have a responsibility to communicate openly and honestly with athletes and other coaches when change is initiated.

Whether you are the current (a) or potential coach (b) the following is recommended:

- When approached by an athlete wishing to change coaches, the coach (a) should maintain a high level of integrity and professionalism and respect the request and wishes of the athlete first and foremost. The coach (a) will need to understand the athlete's rationale for change, acknowledging that the athlete may need support to clearly communicate their rationale or intentions.
- Encourage open and honest conversations between all parties.
- All parties should seek support from an appropriate support person or mediator if required. This support may be a family member, a member of the athletics community, or someone independent.
- If approached by an athlete, Coach (b) should advise the athlete to communicate their intentions to their current coach (a) if the athlete has not already done so.
- If approached by an athlete, it is recommended coach (b) should not engage in any coaching practice until all parties have engaged/completed the proposed/desired transition.

- Ensure that you can provide the athlete with the coaching capability/capacity they seek.
- With the athlete's approval, coach (b) should communicate directly with coach (a) regarding the athlete's transition
- Athletics New Zealand can provide high performance coaches with guidance around transitioning if required.