

Voice of the Coach

Te Tairāwhiti 2024 Insights



Summary and Analysis

This report presents key findings and recommendations from the Voice of the Coach survey, completed by 78 coaches in Te Tairāwhiti between October and November 2024. Building on the findings from 2023, this survey aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the local coaching landscape, exploring coach demographics, motivations, challenges, and the factors shaping their development.

The report remains a cornerstone for Whiti Ora Tairāwhiti in shaping support structures for coaches. Recognising the crucial role coaches have in shaping quality sporting experiences at every level, this initiative is set to improve coaching effectiveness and overall impact.

This year's analysis retains the primary focus on:

- female coaches (48%)
- Coaches that identify as Māori (51%)

Both increased by 2% compared to 2023. The results for these priority groups are highlighted alongside the overall survey findings, providing an opportunity for reflection.

The top sports in the region remain largely the same with Rugby (18%) having the highest number of coaches who completed the survey. Basketball (14%) and Football (14%), both growing by 5% followed by Netball (13%) and Hockey (9%). Additionally, 37% of coaches are involved in coaching multiple sports. A notable shift has occurred in what coaches enjoy most, as 51% of coaches now focus on player development and growth, a rise from 43% in 2023. Seeing enjoyment of the players (24%) and helping players achieve their potential (18%) remain key drivers for coaches in the region.

The 2024 data shows a decline in experienced

coaches, with those coaching for 10+ years dropping from 42% to 38% (-4%) and those in the 5-10 year range decreasing from 19% to 15% (-4%). Meanwhile, early-career coaches (1-5 years) have increased, with 1-2 year coaches growing from 15% to 18% (+3%) and 2-5 year coaches rising from 12% to 15% (+3%). Additionally, the percentage of coaches with less than one year of experience has slightly increased from 12% to 13% (+1%). While recruitment appears strong, concerns remain around long term retention, especially as new coaches report lower satisfaction levels.

Coaches continue to predominantly work with tamariki and rangatahi, with primary school aged participants making up 56% of those coached. Secondary school-aged participants now account for 29%, a significant decrease from 49% in the previous year. Additionally, coaching for 18+ participants has nearly doubled now 29%.

The survey has identified that 10% of male coaches are coaching female teams, a notable change in the data collection from 2023, when this was not captured. Female coaches leading mixed teams have increased (+9%), while male coaches coaching mixed teams have decreased significantly (-22%). A new category tracking gender-diverse teams (5%) signals a growing emphasis on inclusivity in coaching.

NPS

A key indicator of the quality of experiences is the Net Promoter Score (NPS), reflecting individual satisfaction. When individuals promote an experience to others, they are intrinsically satisfied with the 'quality of experience'. A positive NPS indicates that there are more promoters than detractors. The overall NPS dropped slightly from -1 to -3. Compared to the 2023 data, the 2024 NPS distribution shows a notable shift. The percentage of detractors, coaches scoring 1-6 and less likely to recommend coaching has decreased from 34% to 27%, indicating a slight reduction in dissatisfaction. However, there has been a significant rise in passive coaches (scores of 7-8), increasing from 33% to 45%. This suggests that many remain neutral about their experience rather than actively promoting coaching. Meanwhile, promoters (scores of 9-10) have declined from 33% to 26%. Additionally, 3% of respondents did not answer.

Coaches that identify as Māori experienced a significant improvement, rising from -14 to +15 (+29). The relationships formed with players and the sense of giving back to the sport are frequently mentioned as key motivators for coaches that identify as Māori. Similarly, female coaches saw their NPS increase from -19 to 0 (+19). Female coaches enjoy seeing players grow in skill and confidence, and they appreciate the relationships built. They also highlight the need for better training opportunities and resources to help them manage the demands of coaching, especially for those new to the role.

Sports Pathway Framework

The Sport Pathways Framework, developed by Sport NZ and High Performance Sport NZ in consultation with the sector, aims to ensure that all New Zealanders can benefit from sport throughout their lives. It works by aligning people, programmes, and environments to create a unified system that provides quality experiences for everyone. The framework defines four coaching domains: Foundation (33%), which introduces sport through fun and skill development, Social (17%), more flexible and

less formal formats, Competitive (46%), which focuses on more structured competitive formats, and Performance (4%), which is dedicated to high-performance athletes on the national and international stage. The dominance of competitive coaching highlights strong engagement in structured sport, while the balance between foundation and social coaching reinforces the importance of grassroots and community sport.

Coach Development

Self directed learning (64%) is the top method of development, indicating that coaches are largely responsible for their own learning. This also reflects that 35% of coaches are not aware of coach development support within their sport. Mentoring (41%) for the second year has had the greatest impact on the growth of a coach. 24% of female coaches highlighted that they have undertaken mentoring as a development approach. 21% of coaches that identify as Māori rank whānau as the second highest influence on their growth. This reflects the same result as 2023. Coaching networks (40%) are a key need for new coaches, highlighting the importance of both informal and formal connections where they can engage, learn, and share experiences.

Challenges

Player behaviour and engagement became the top challenge for all coaches (40%), doubling from 20% in 2023. This issue is particularly pronounced among female coaches (57%), who report difficulties with player commitment, attendance, and motivation. Time commitment remains as the second biggest challenge at 33%. Coach development opportunities (32%) were newly reported as a challenge in 2024, reflecting a growing demand for more training, mentorship, and pathways. Although parents are the fourth biggest challenge for all coaches (30%), female coaches identified parents as their second biggest challenge 51%. While not in the top 5, Coaches that identify as Māori highlighted cost (15%), travel (13%) and communication (13%) as key concerns.

Improvements

When coaches were asked to identify the most important factor for improving their coaching experience in 2024, 19% emphasised the need for more tailored mentoring, asking for personalised guidance from experienced coaches within their sport. Following this, 18% of coaches stressed the importance of creating a more supportive coaching environment, recognising the need for more resources to improve coaching conditions. Overall emphasis on resource needs has declined but access to online resources, support groups, and opportunities to learn from coach developers or across different sports is beneficial. Wānanga and informal gatherings provide valuable spaces for shared learning and growth.

Diversity and Inclusion

Coaches were asked whether they believe all genders, ethnicities, age groups, and experience levels receive equal support. Despite its subjective nature, this question provided important insights into how coaches perceive diversity and inclusion in their sport.

In 2024, fewer coaches (37%) believed that support was equal for all genders, ethnicities, and experience levels, down from 41% in 2023, while the percentage of coaches who felt support was inadequate, remained at 32%. 40% of coaches that identified as Māori expressed dissatisfaction regarding their level of support highlighting themes such as only opportunities in well resourced areas, systemic racism, limited access in rural areas and gender disparity. Female coaches highlighted themes such as insufficient resources for coach development and male dominated environments. 35% of female coaches expressed insufficient support which is 6% higher than 2023. These findings highlight the importance of greater awareness in sports when developing policies and practices, especially regarding diversity and inclusion.

Coaches were asked if they coach athletes with disabilities and/or visual or hearing impairments, while 38% of coaches currently coach athletes

with disabilities, only 55% feel equipped to do so, with 26% feeling unequipped and 18% unsure. Many coaches rely on self directed learning, such as online videos. There is a strong demand for specialised training, including workshops on adaptive coaching techniques, access to specialised equipment, and more inclusive events for tamariki takiwatanga. These findings highlight the need for structured support, increased resourcing, and greater opportunities to ensure athletes with disabilities can fully participate in sport.

Next steps

Moving forward, Whiti Ora Tairāwhiti aims to collaborate with key stakeholders to address the identified challenges and opportunities. Priority actions include:

- Engaging with clubs, codes, RSOs, NSOs, and the council to encourage integration of these insights into their strategic planning and decision making
- Utilising The Sideline Yak Podcast to provide a platform for local coaches to share experiences, discuss challenges, and explore solutions, encouraging collaboration and driving action on key themes from this survey
- Collaborating with Sport NZ to explore how mentoring strategies can better support approaches to coaching
- Structured training for coaching athletes with disabilities

Whiti Ora Tairāwhiti seeks to build a sustainable and thriving coaching environment in the region. This report serves as a foundation for ongoing improvement, guiding efforts to better coaching experiences and to create a more inclusive and well supported coaching community.

Note: There were no mandatory questions asked in the survey, and some questions allowed multiple responses. Because of this the results may not add up to 100%.

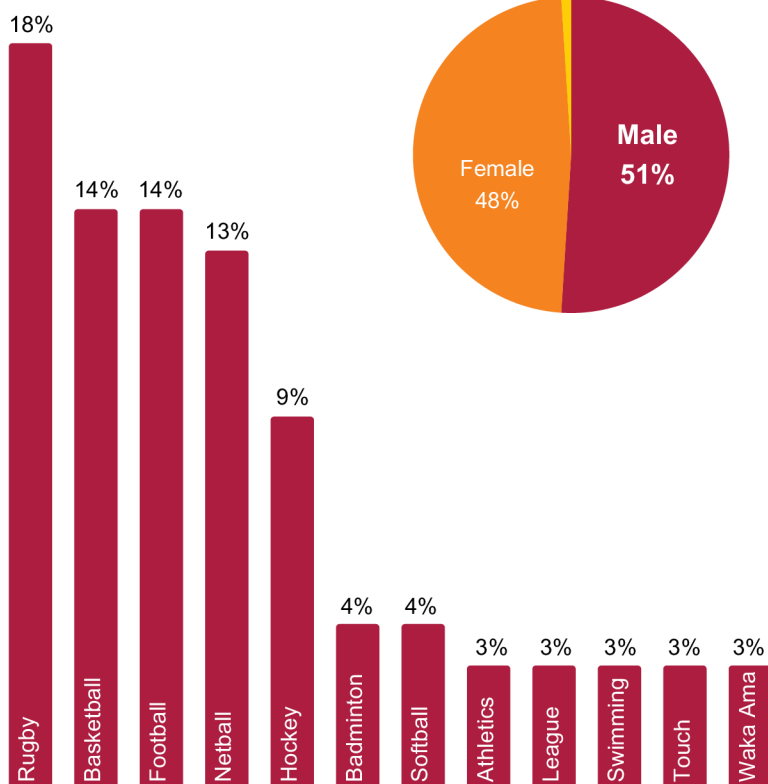
Who took part?



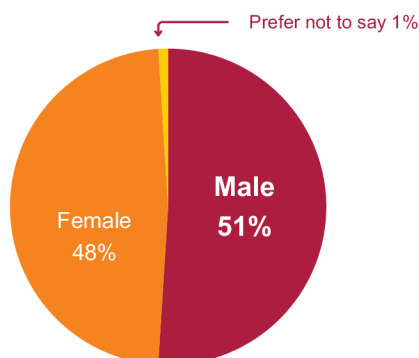
78 coaches in the Tairāwhiti region. Of these, 37% coach more than one sport.

19 different sports were identified as their 'main sport' to coach. An additional 9 sports were identified as 'other sports coached'.

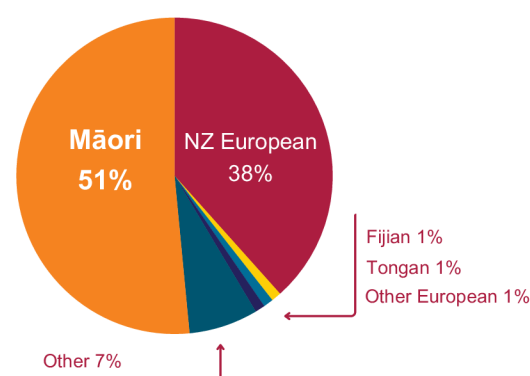
Top Sports



Gender



Ethnicity



Upon analysing the insights, we chose to focus again on two key priority areas: **female coaches (48%)** and **coaches identifying as Māori (51%)**. Both groups showed a 2% increase from last year's figures of 46% and 49%, respectively. Insights specific to these priority groups are presented alongside the general survey results, providing a viewpoint for reflection.

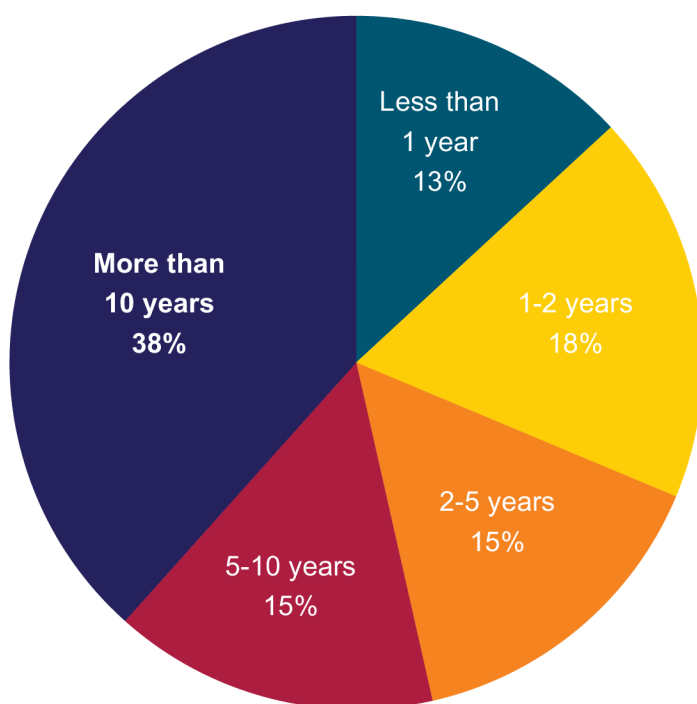
Note: These are the sports that were mentioned as a coaches 'main' sport.

Who took part?

What do coaches enjoy most about coaching?

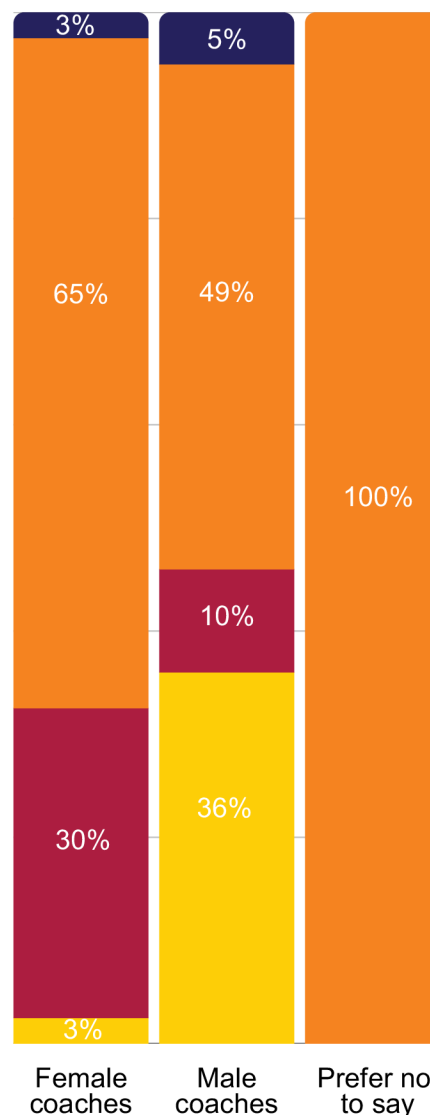
- 51%** Development and growth
e.g development of player/skills
- 24%** Seeing the fun/enjoyment of the players
- 18%** Seeing the players achieve their potential
- 14%** Creating relationships
- 13%** Teaching/sharing knowledge

How long have they been coaching?

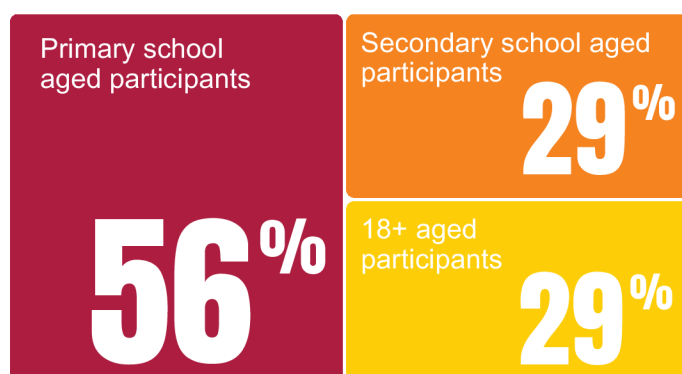


Who are they coaching?

- Male participants/teams
- Female participants/teams
- Mixed participants/teams
- Gender diverse participants/teams



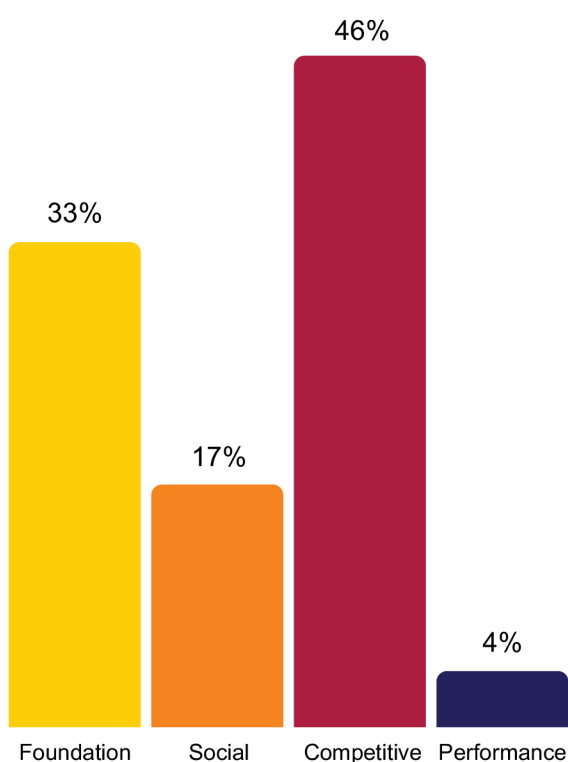
What age do they coach?



Sport Pathways Framework

The **Sport Pathways Framework** ensures everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand can enjoy the benefits of sport for life. It has been developed by Sport NZ and High Performance Sport NZ in consultation with the sector to ensure the system works together to provide quality experiences for all New Zealanders by aligning people, programmes and environments. To find out more visit <https://sportnz.org.nz/get-active/ways-to-get-active/sport/sport-pathways/>

Coaches were asked which coaching domain best describes the focus of their current coaching role. Their responses are below:



The Sport Pathways Framework is built around four domains. These domains are about ensuring everyone can enjoy sport in safe, supportive and inspiring environments that match their motivations or aspirations.

Foundation - First sport experience, focusing on enjoyment, skill development and learning.

Social - More flexible, less formal formats, focusing on enjoyment and playing sport with friends.

Competitive - More structured, competitive formats and programmes, run at local, regional and national levels, focusing on participants and athletes who have drive, aspiration, and motivation to improve and reach their potential.

Performance - National and international competitions and programmes, focusing on the development and performance of nationally identified athletes who demonstrate the attributes, ambition and attitude to excel on the world stage.

NET Promoter Score

A key measure of quality experiences is the Net Promoter Score (NPS) which indicates an individuals' level of satisfaction. When individuals promote an experience to others, they are intrinsically satisfied with the 'quality of experience'. A positive NPS indicates that there are more promoters than detractors.

NPS -3

Female coaches had an NPS of 0. While many coaches value the rewarding aspects, others feel discouraged by significant barriers, including high time commitment.



"Coaching is all about being that positive role model to the children learning off you. Coaching has its many moments. But overall, it's amazing."
1-2 years experience



"I think there should be free educated upskill programmes dotted throughout the year to keep everyone updated and skilled up to move into the next phase if they're new to sport codes."
Less than 1 year experience

Coaches that identified as Māori had an NPS of +15 and find coaching deeply rewarding, especially through building strong relationships, supporting tamariki in their growth and well-being, and giving back to the community.



"Coaching can be a great self-reflection tool and can give you insights into your own character and how you interact in the world. Everyone should give it a go."
1-2 years experience



"The reality is coaching is voluntary, and it takes a lot of time if you're going to be good at it. There aren't enough resources within the sporting codes to support all levels of coaching and it's not readily available."
More than 10 years experience

	All	Māori	Female
Less than 1 year	-50	-25	-60
1-2 years	+29	+50	+44
2-5 years	0	-20	0
5-10 years	-8	0	+33
More than 10 years	0	+27	0

Respondents were asked to explain their rating. A range of comments have been selected below:

Detractor (NPS of 0-6)

6 - "It takes a lot of time and money and sometimes it breaks you when you get abused on sideline. So, I would say you need thick skin."
More than 10 years experience

Passive (NPS of 7-8)

8 - "Coaching is rewarding at the same time, it takes energy, time, resilience, patience and many other things to coach long term. Ultimately, as long as you enjoy coaching and you feel you are adding value to the community, teams and individual players and you continue the enjoyment, then coach."
5-10 years experience

Promoter (NPS of 9-10)

9 - "Coaching is so good for your interaction with the young rising stars. Seeing them gain confidence with their skills, the friendships they make and some of the competitive side shows. Also, getting to know the parents."
1-2 years experience

Coach development

65%

of coaches reported being aware of coach development support within their sport, while 35% were not.

What coach development has been undertaken?

64% Self directed (i.e. research)

47% Online videos

46% Collaborating with other coaches

42% In person workshops (code specific)

31% Certificates in coaching



Mentoring ranked just outside the top 5, with 24% of female coaches highlighting it as a development approach undertaken.

What or who has the greatest impact on the growth of a coach?

41% Mentor/other coaches/specific people

24% Overall experience coaching

17% Family

14% The players

10% Education (workshops, online); and Support (from school, club or parents)



For the second year, **Family** ranked as the second greatest influence on the growth of Māori coaches, with 21%.

Coaches were asked what would have helped them when they first started coaching. The top themes were:

40%

Having a network of coaches to learn from



37% Mentoring

32% More training

29% Having more/better equipment

28% More supportive parents

Challenges

Top 5 challenges faced as a coach

- 40%** Player behaviour and engagement
- 33%** Time
- 32%** Coach development
- 30%** Parents
- 14%** Resources/Facilities

Player behaviour and engagement is the top challenge for both female coaches (57%) and coaches that identify as Māori (38%). Female coaches identified **Parents** as their second biggest challenge. While not in the Top 5, coaches identifying as Māori also highlighted **Costs** (15%), **Travel** (13%) and **Communication** (13%) as key concerns.

Improvements

If each sport code/s were to focus on one aspect to improve the coaching experience for all coaches, what could it be?

19%

Tailored mentoring from within your code (personalised guidance from experienced coaches in your sport)

18%

Creating a supportive coaching environment (more resources or improved conditions for coaching)

17%

Collaboration with other coaches or clubs (sharing ideas and strategies)

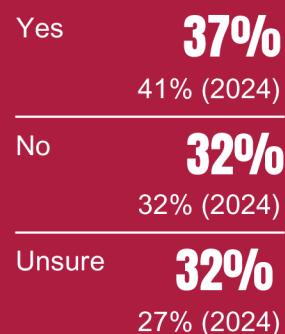
14%

Coaching certifications or courses (official qualifications to enhance your skills)

Diversity and Inclusion

Coaches were asked 'do you feel that coaches of all genders, ethnicities, age groups and/or level of experience receive the same level of support?'

Coaching support is perceived to vary widely, with positive examples of **equitable access, club collaboration and culture**, but significant concerns remain about disparities across sports, **geographic locations, systemic biases**, and **limited support for less-experienced or rural coaches**.



"I haven't seen anything to make me feel otherwise. Some coaches need to work on pronunciation with Māori names though."



"Rurally we are not supported as much. Not as many clinics or we have to drive an hour to attend one."

Coaches that identify as Māori

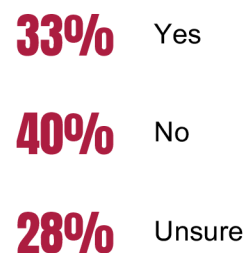
Themes reported **equal support in certain clubs, opportunities in well resourced areas**, and **available support if sought**, but faced challenges with **systemic racism, limited rural access, unequal prioritisation of sports, network-based barriers**, and **gender disparity**.



"Within our club space, I would say yes. We are all pretty equal and often lean on each other to help out."



"It maybe more of a club issue, but men teams are always treated higher then women teams"



Female coaches

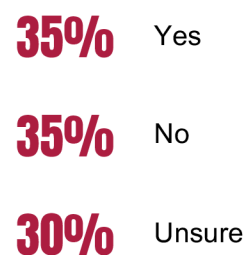
Themes reported **equal support in some clubs, available support if sought**, and **peer collaboration benefits**, but faced challenges with **limited rural access, resourcing for coach development**, and **male-dominated environments**.



"Support is available for all, up to coaches to want it"



"Too limiting of opportunities re coaching development, i.e. only reps coaches invited to a HP session with visiting coach"

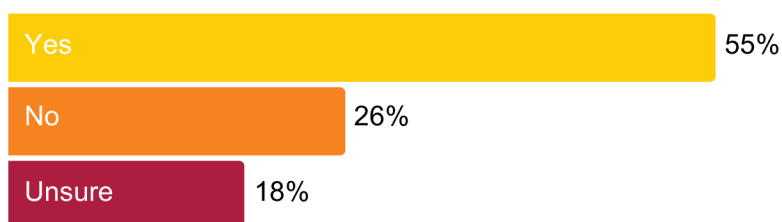


Diversity and Inclusion

Coaches were asked if they coach athletes with disabilities and/or visual or hearing impairments.



Coaches were asked if they feel equipped to coach athletes with disabilities and/or visual or hearing impairments.



Coaches who answered 'no' or 'unsure' were asked what support would help them feel equipped to coach athletes with disabilities and/or visual or hearing impairments.

"I have no idea. I use examples on YouTube to help me, some work some don't so I have to work one on one. HELP!"
More than 10 years experience

"Specific training so we can make sure everyone is included and enjoys the game. Having the right equipment as well to assist someone who may have a disability."
Less than 1 year experience

Assistance in training techniques for the ability of the child so that they grow in their game and confidence to play.
1-2 years experience

I think we need a lot more events for tamariki takiwatanga.
More than 10 years experience



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