



SANFL Female Coaching Academy 2017 - 2026

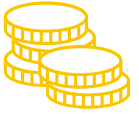
South Australian National Football League

Women in High Performance Coaching



Female Coaching Academy 2017-2023

South Australian Football League



\$1K-\$5K



10-month program



Delivered by SANFL in collaboration with expert AFL coaches



8 – 16 Aspiring Coaches each year

Aim and Objectives

Increase the number, capability and progression of women coaches through a structured development pathway.

Support coaches to build confidence, gain accreditation, access practical coaching experience, and connect with mentors and peers.

Description

Established in 2017, the SANFL Female Coaching Academy is a 10-month development program for aspiring women coaches.

It combines education, mentoring, peer learning, AFLW observation, coaching feedback and leadership development, while working with clubs to strengthen recruitment, retention and player-to-coach pathways.



Program Format

Selection:

- Annual Program by application

Format:

Evolved each year. Key elements

- Group education workshops
- Sharing and collaboration
- Coach feedback
- Live coaching and feedback
- One on one Coach Developers
- Observing HP environments

Facilitators:

- SANFL Coaching Manager – Dave Reynolds

Evaluation:

Retention, growth and progression

Outcomes and Impact

Female coach numbers have grown from 10 in 2017 to 80 in 2023, with academy participants progressing into AFLW coaching, SANFLW Head Coach roles, South Australian State Youth coaching and academy mentor roles.

Forty coaches have completed Level 2 accreditation and nine have completed Level 3, while graduates now contribute as presenters and mentors within coach education programs.





Female Coaching Academy 2017+

South Australian Football League

Recommendations

- Commit to a sustained, multi-year pathway rather than one-off workshops.
- Personalise learning so each coach builds confidence, accreditation and role-specific capability.
- Combine formal education with mentoring, practical coaching, feedback and peer support.
- Keep coaches connected as roles evolve, with opportunities to return, mentor and contribute.
- Partner with clubs to improve recruitment, retention and player-to-coach transitions.
- Use graduates as mentors and presenters to strengthen the next cohort.

Application for others

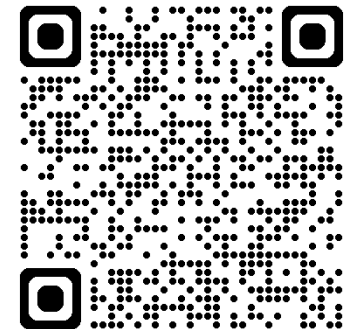
Other sports can apply this model by treating women's coach development as a workforce strategy, not a short-term program. A structured pathway that blends mentoring, practical experience, personalised learning and peer support can improve coach confidence, capability and progression.

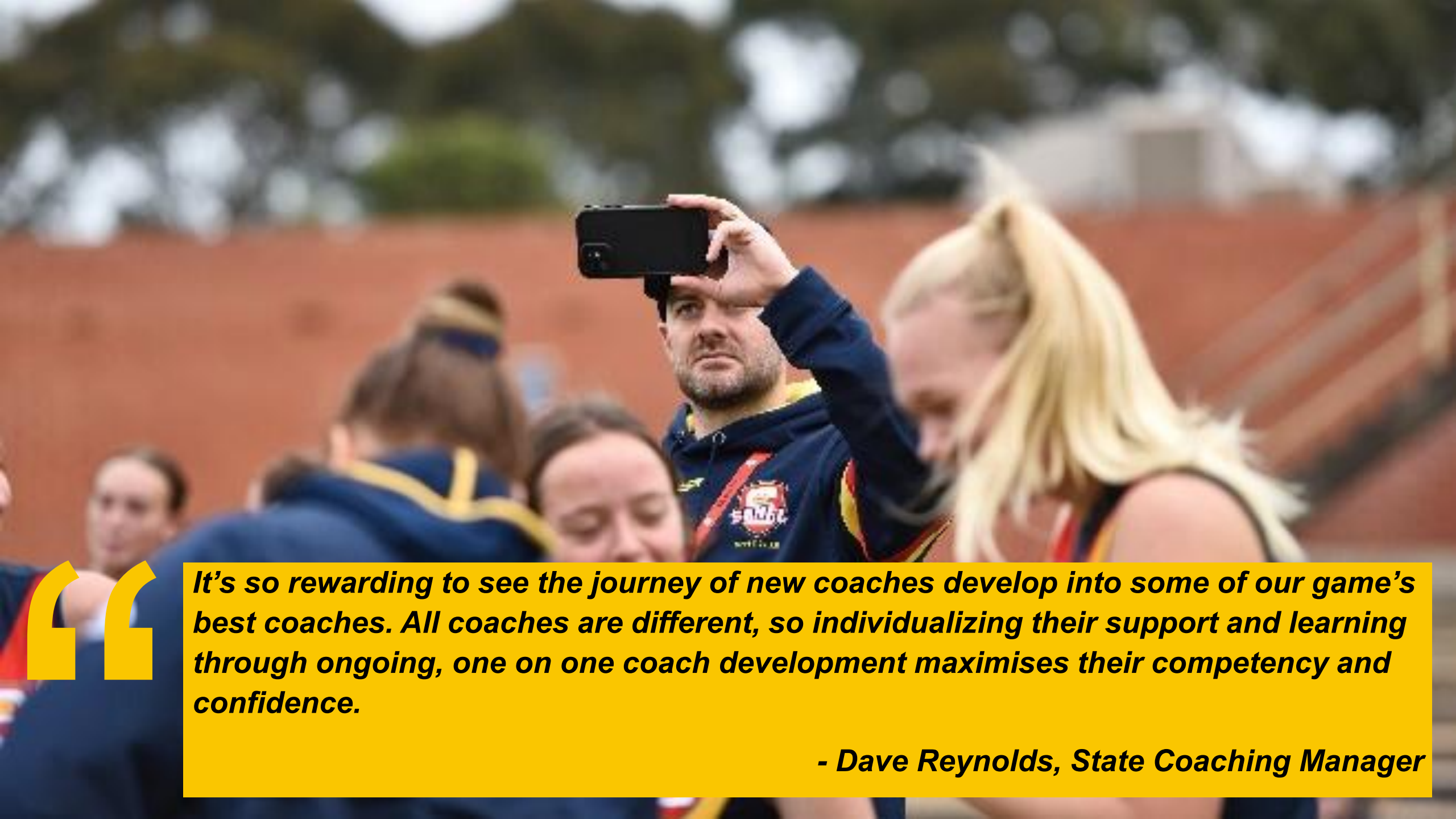
The SANFL example also shows the importance of working with clubs. When clubs help identify, support and retain women coaches — and graduates return as mentors — the development system becomes stronger and more sustainable.



**2025 SA Power Networks
Community Female Coaching
Academy**

Female Coaching - SANFL





It's so rewarding to see the journey of new coaches develop into some of our game's best coaches. All coaches are different, so individualizing their support and learning through ongoing, one on one coach development maximises their competency and confidence.

- Dave Reynolds, State Coaching Manager