



Managing Parental Leave

Squash Australia

Women in High Performance Coaching



Managing Parental Leave

Squash Australia



Three-stage transition



Led by Squash Australia



Leave, cover, return



2 women coaches supported

Aims and Objectives

Retain a valued National Pathways Coach during parental leave while keeping athlete development on track.

Create a structured transition that supported Jenny Duncalf, developed another coach and minimised disruption.

Description

Squash Australia managed the transition in three stages: maternity leave, maternity cover and return to work.

The team agreed a communication plan, appointed an experienced cover coach, completed a structured handover and supported a phased, family-friendly return.



Challenges / Opportunities

Parental leave affected the coach, athletes, managers and cover coach, making continuity and communication critical.

Handled well, the transition created development opportunities for all involved.

Support needed to continue after return to work through flexibility and regular check-ins.

Outcomes

Retained an experienced coach and developed another coach through the cover role.

Maintained athlete continuity and supported Jenny's return.

Contributed to Australia's best junior girls' World Junior Championships result in 20 years, while enabling a family-friendly return.



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Recommendations

- Plan leave, maternity cover and return to work early with the coach.
- Use cover roles to develop coaches.
- Keep appropriate program connection.
- Offer flexible, family-friendly return.
- Communicate openly and build trust.
- Treat support as retention and talent development.

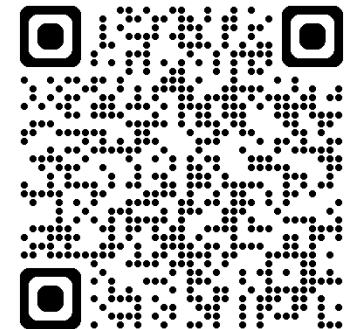
Application for others

Squash Australia found successful transitions rely on early planning, open communication and collaboration between the departing coach, cover coach and organisation. A strong handover, maintained connection and family-friendly support helped retain the coach and keep athlete development on track.

For other sports, plan maternity leave in three stages: leave, cover and return. Succession planning, regular communication, gradual transitions and flexible practices can retain talent, develop staff and minimise disruption to athletes and programs.



ToC Women's Leadership Award
PSA Foundation: Jenny Duncalf
interview





Jenny's Journey



National Pathways Coach
Squash Australia



Prep for Maternity leave
Squash Australia



Maternity Leave
Notes



Return to Work
Notes



National Pathways Coach
Working XX days per week.
Travelling XXX





“As a first time Mum my experience with Squash Australia and maternity leave was a smooth and transparent one. We were upfront and open about options of how best to proceed in terms of timelines and personnel to fill my role and never had any issues with the process.

As many parents will know returning to work is a difficult balancing act and I’m grateful that my workplace and colleagues have provided a supportive and understanding environment to allow my return to high performance coaching as a mother as manageable as possible.

Finley is now a travelling member of the team!”

**- Jenny Duncalf, National Pathways Coach,
Squash Australia**