

Head Coach U21 Men's National Team – Role Profile



JOB TITLE:	Men's u21 Breakthrough Head Coach/Senior Men's Support Coach
RESPONSIBLE TO THE POSITION OF:	High Performance Director
ROLE TYPE:	Fixed term contract of employment (0.8)
ROLE TERM:	January 2026- December 2026 with the possibility of extension

CONTEXT

Hockey Ireland is the National Governing Body for hockey on the island of Ireland. Our Men's Senior Team finished 10th at Paris Olympic Games, and our u21 team are currently preparing for Junior World Cup 2025.

The medium-term strategic performance objective for Hockey Ireland is to become and sustain Ireland as a Top 8 nation. We are currently looking to recruit an u21 Men's Team Head Coach who takes a dual role as a support coach to the Senior Men's Team, to lead and deliver our Men's u21 Programme, and support the Senior Men's Programme.

The Head Coach will be a key leader in the Hockey Ireland ecosystem, working with the wider organisation, senior programme staff (men & women), and into the pathway to develop Ireland's capacity as a leading hockey nation. The position will be based primarily at Hockey Ireland headquarters at the Sport Ireland Campus at Abbottstown, Dublin. The nature of the role demands a national brief across the 32 counties of Ireland as well as travel overseas. The successful candidate will be required to reside in Ireland full-time and should therefore have the required visa.

PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE JOB:

The U21 National Team and Breakthrough Programme is a critical link between Junior Age Group and Senior International hockey. The purpose of this role is to ensure:

- Identified future senior internationals gain high quality, consistent international programme and competition experience, developing capacity to break through to senior squad and have impact within year 1.
- U21 national team is prepared to perform at European and World level.
- There is alignment and connection between senior and u21 teams, staff, principles of play, processes and practices, in order to advance development players into Senior Team environment

Coaching	• In conjunction with the Senior Team Coaching staff, identify, develop and manage the next group of identified players below the current National Senior squad. • Coach the Irish U21 Men's team and ensure outstanding individual and team development and performance. • Develop identified talented players to become capable of performing at senior international level within 24 months. • Create a team identity for the U21 team, harnessing the essence of the Irish mentality, where every player knows what is expected of them. • Maximise opportunities on the field to develop technical, tactical and set piece competency. • Maximise opportunities on and off the field to develop game understanding, confidence, cohesion and positive team spirit. • Develop technical and position specific competencies in current senior international players • Develop a specialist area in the Senior Men's programme in line with needs and coaching staff specialisms • Provide written reports on players' technical and physical development • Manage communication with players around selection, entry and exit to the programme • Regularly provide feedback to players within programme
Programme Leadership	• In conjunction with the Performance Director and Senior Men's Head Coach, develop, manage and deliver the programme and budget of the National U21 Men's squad. • Communicate effectively with staff, players and relevant stakeholders. • Work closely with the Team Manager to ensure continuity in planning and communications • Manage a staff group of multidisciplinary experts to maximise player support in a manner that positively impacts team performance. • Lead assistant and specialist coaches to ensure their individual strengths are deployed to maximise the potential of the team. • Create an environment that challenges players and staff to excel and meet senior international levels of execution.

Pathway Integration	Work closely with the Performance Director, Senior Coaching team and Talent Development Manager to; • Identify, develop and plan international exposure to future senior internationals • Ensure tactical and technical alignment with senior team • Provide a link between Head Coaches of the U16 and U18 Irish National Junior Age Grade Squads and Senior squad, engaging in quarterly holistic player reviews and regular informal communication to maximize pathway alignment and connection • Ensure the U21 national team is a flagbearer of Hockey Ireland High Performance culture and ethos • Act as part of a network of national coaches who deliver regional sessions for all Hockey Ireland players
Other	• Other duties as required by demands of the role and / or PD

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will be an experienced international coaching professional, or an emerging high potential coach. They will demonstrate the required coaching and leadership attributes, an understanding of high performance and the current trends in international hockey, and the capability to deliver a programme which will convert pathway players to senior internationals, and ensure Ireland become a consistent presence at Junior World Cups.

ESSENTIAL - Qualifications and Experience

- Minimum of 4 years head coach/team leader experience
- Level 3 and/or FIH coaching qualifications or equivalent (or working towards them)
- Up to date Safeguarding Level 1 certificate or commitment to complete with 1 month of starting date
- Experience in planning, organising and implementing a comprehensive domestic or international coaching programme
- Understanding and experience of the demands of high performance sport
- Excellent communications (verbal and written)
- Ability to apply the principles of coaching, sport science, medicine and technology within a high performance programme
- Exceptional people skills, with an emphasis on the management of player and coach personnel
- Capacity to travel domestically and overseas for extended periods

DESIRABLE - Qualifications and Experience

- Significant international team coaching experience working at U21, Development or Senior Level
- An understanding of the Irish sporting landscape, culture and mentality

- Proven record of success in international or domestic hockey
- Growth mindset
- Ability to motivate and inspire
- Ability to develop and implement sport strategies, systems and processes to deliver outstanding results
- Experience of delivering within financial budgets
- A competent knowledge of the latest coaching software systems
- A full clean driving license

Safeguarding requirements for all roles with U-18's:

Due to the nature of the role, the person will be required to:

- Adhere to Hockey Ireland's safeguarding policy.
- Successfully complete the vetting process (Garda vetting or Access NI).
- Attend safeguarding 1 basic awareness training.
- Attend a Coaches and Managers specific workshop
- Adhere to the code of conduct
- Be prepared to enact best practice safeguarding at all times representing Hockey Ireland.

Note: Applicants who have no previous experience of volunteering or working with underage players within a club setting or at regional or national level will be asked to fill in an information form giving names of two references that can be contacted.

Hockey Ireland will provide the following to successful candidates:

- A competitive package commensurate with qualifications, skills and experience.
- A budget towards out-of-pocket expenses
- Hockey Ireland branded uniform
- Guidance and support from the Talent Development Manager and Director of High Performance.

Application Process:

- Applicants will need to be eligible to work within the EU & UK.
- Closing date for applications **10am November 6th, 2025.**
- A detailed letter of application and full CV (max. 2 pages) should be sent by email to christine.oshea@hockey.ie and reference 'u21 Men's Head Coach' in the subject line
- Applicants will be short-listed on the basis of information supplied. Your application will be retained as confidential.

Appointment will be made subject to satisfactory:

- Garda Vetting
- Reference Checking Procedures

Hockey Ireland is an equal opportunity employer