



## **Junior Coaches FAQs**

**Spring 2021**

### **How does junior coaches differ from a regular season of Gear Girls?**

Junior Coaches is for young women in 7th-10th grade looking to take the next step in becoming a Gear Girls leader. Participants will learn how to facilitate lessons, coach with compassion, and exemplify leadership during Gear Girls rides. Since this program builds upon athletes' prior Gear Girls experiences, Junior Coaches should have already completed multiple seasons of Gear Girls or a combination of one season of Gear Girls plus several years of mountain biking experience.

### **What is the schedule for Junior Coaches?**

Junior Coaches meet 6 times throughout the spring. Each meeting will cover a different set of topics and/or special activities; we hope participants can make it to every meeting, as to get the most out of this program!

Drop off and pick up locations will vary, and the typical meeting time will be on selected Tuesdays 3:30-6 pm. Please see the [calendar](#) for details.

### **Can my daughter participate in Junior Coaches and Gear Girls at the same time?**

Absolutely. In fact, dual participation is encouraged. If your daughter is not able to attend the entire Gear Girls spring season or is in 9th-10th grade, she may attend selected Gear Girls practices, since our group sizes are limited through the coronavirus pandemic.

As girls develop their skills at Junior Coaches meetings, they will have opportunities to apply their learning during Gear Girls practices–i.e. Facilitating a lesson/game/debrief, helping with bike maintenance, assisting newer riders, and more. Putting concepts into practice will only deepen learning and make it longer-lasting.

### **What will my daughter be doing and learning?**

Junior Coaches will learn and grow via a continuum of: Developing coaching skills -> practicing coaching -> receiving feedback -> developing coaching skills. Participants will ride, practice some intermediate to advanced mountain biking skills, build their leadership toolboxes, and gain experience coaching their peers. Each participant will facilitate one 10-20 minute lesson on a topic/skill of their choice in a supportive, growth-oriented setting; after practicing delivering their lessons, girls will have the opportunity to facilitate a second time at a Gear Girls practice. See below for more details on what we'll be doing during Junior Coaches meetings.

#### **Meeting 1: March 16 • Intro and Leadership**

**Goal:** As a group, set a framework for the season's expectations and goals. Get the wheels turning for how we want to show up as leaders.

**Explore:**

*Setting ourselves up for success* - What will we be doing during junior coaches? What do we hope to accomplish, individually and as a group?

*Leadership* - What are qualities of an effective leader? What kinds of leadership styles are there? What are the different styles' benefits & drawbacks? What leadership qualities do you naturally exhibit?

#### **Meeting 2: March 30 • Facilitation**

**Goal:** Junior Coaches learn the arc of a lesson and pick out a skill/information they would like to facilitate during Gear Girls.

**Explore:** How do we grab the group's attention? How do we outline a lesson plan? What skills or knowledge would you like to teach about?

#### **Meeting 3: April 6 • Group Management**

**Goal:** Junior Coaches pick up some tips and tricks for keeping the moral high and the group safe. Two girls facilitate their lessons.

**Explore:** How do we keep the group together? How do we effectively communicate when issues arise? How do we give growth-oriented feedback? What safety considerations should we be aware of? What are some scenarios we might encounter?

#### **Meeting 4: April 20 • Workshopping Tricky Terrain**

**Goal:** Junior Coaches practice identifying lines and riding through technical terrain. Two or three girls facilitate their lessons.

**Explore:** What considerations go into choosing a line? What skills will help us move across technical terrain? What drills will help us practice those skills in our own backyards/neighborhoods? Does challenging terrain bring up any mental and emotional hurdles? What are some tools for overcoming mental roadblocks and fear?

#### **Meeting 5: May 4 • Bike Maintenance**

**Goal:** Junior Coaches become better prepared to keep their bikes in tip top shape and troubleshoot mechanical issues.

**Explore:** What is the anatomy of a mountain bike? What parts should be maintained at what frequency and how? What are some maintenance issues that could come up, and how do you fix them? What tools do you need?

#### **Meeting 6: May 18 • Thru-ride and Debrief**

**Goal:** Junior Coaches have a fun last ride together. Two or three girls facilitate their lessons.

**Explore:** What feedback do you have for the Junior Coaches program? What did you learn? Can your new understandings/skills be transferred to other areas of life? What skills do you hope to keep developing?

#### **What happens after girls complete the program?**

Junior Coaches will have opportunities to continue building their leadership skills during future seasons of Gear Girls. For example, at practices, Junior Coaches may assist with bike checks, leading the group on trail, facilitating lessons, and giving pointers to peers. At the start of Gear Girls seasons, we'll discuss with each Junior Coach how they would like to help out and develop their coaching toolbox; we'll check in regularly with girls about their personal goals, process, and progress through each season.

Our hope is that young women will want to continue returning as Junior Coaches through high school and then stay involved as volunteer and/or paid coaches as adults.

#### **What measures are being taken in response to the coronavirus?**

The Arizona Trail Association's Gear Girls is implementing vigilant COVID-19 epidemic protocols. Detailed information about the virus and our safety strategies can be found in our [comprehensive document](#).

In addition to the requirements stated in the [ATA Epidemic Protocol](#), athletes will be required to:

- Wear a mask at all times unless they are eating, drinking, riding with minimum 6 feet between one another, or are directed that it's safe to remove it.
- Carry and use disinfectants (provided by ATA).
- Refrain from sharing any gear, supplies, and food.

We ask that girls kindly refrain from participation if they have COVID-19 symptoms, believe they may have COVID-19, or have had any exposure to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

### Is there a fee?

Nope! Our program is funded by grants and private donations. We hope to remove the barriers to entry as much as possible and don't want cost to be an issue. We do however accept donations from anyone who wants to support Gear Girls or our youth programming in general; you are welcome to donate here:

<http://www.aztrail.org/donate.html>

### What will she need to participate?

- Wear a mask and bring an extra one just in case.
- A hydration pack with at least 2 liters of water.
- Snacks.
- Comfy weather-appropriate clothing (layers) meant for moving with nothing flapping or loose near the legs or feet. This is to avoid getting clothing caught in wheels or chains.
- Closed toed shoes.
- Glasses or sunglasses. Eye protection while riding is required.
- A mountain bike in good shape for singletrack trails. Let us know if you'll need to borrow a bike.
- Bike gloves & helmet; we have gloves & helmets to lend out.
- Any participants who require an epi pen, inhaler, or other life saving medications must have those medications available for every practice.

