

Sports Centre Manager interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Sports Centre Manager roles typically focus on your ability to run a facility day to day, lead a varied team, and handle safety and budgets. You may meet with a panel from local government, a private operator, or a community organisation.

- **Operational process:** Questions about how you manage schedules, rosters, budgets, and daily routines.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of leadership, conflict resolution, or event management.
- **Scenario:** How you would handle a safety incident, a staffing shortage, or a difficult customer.
- **Technical:** Knowledge of booking systems, compliance, and WHS requirements.
- **Stakeholder:** Working with councils, clubs, schools, and community groups.

The interview usually starts with an introduction to the centre and the role, then moves through a mix of behavioural and scenario questions. You might be asked to walk through a budget or roster example, and there is often time for your questions at the end. Some employers include a tour of the facility or a practical task like reviewing a schedule.

1. Walk me through how you would manage the daily operations of a sports centre, from opening to closing.

Why they ask

This tests your operational knowledge and ability to prioritise tasks across a full day.

How to structure your answer

Give a step-by-step walkthrough. Start with opening checks, then move through staff briefing, court setups, program coordination, incident handling, and closing procedures. Finish with reporting or handover.

Example answer

"I would arrive early to unlock and check the facility, including courts, lights, and first aid kits. Then I would brief staff on the day's bookings, any maintenance issues, and special events. Throughout the day I would monitor programs, step in to cover breaks or gaps, and handle any customer issues. At closing I would secure the building, complete the daily report, and note anything for the next shift."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a staffing shortage or a rostering issue.

Why they ask

This assesses your problem-solving and ability to keep the centre running under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Describe the situation, the task, the action you took, and the result. Keep the focus on what you did and how you minimised disruption.

Example answer

"On a busy Saturday, two staff called in sick and I had a junior competition plus regular court hires. I called casuals from my list, adjusted breaks for the remaining team, and stepped in to run the junior program myself. I kept all bookings running and no sessions were cancelled. I later built a larger casual pool and a simple text alert system to cover future gaps."

3. A member slips and falls on a wet court. What do you do?

Why they ask

This checks your safety awareness and ability to follow correct incident procedures.

How to structure your answer

Work through immediate safety, first aid, reporting, and prevention. Show that you stay calm and follow your training.

Example answer

"First I would secure the area to prevent further injuries and check on the member. If they need first aid, I would call for a trained staff member and stay with them until they are okay. Then I would complete an incident report and take photos if needed. Finally I would review the cleaning schedule and signage to stop it happening again."

4. How do you develop and monitor a budget for a facility like this?**Why they ask**

This tests your financial management and ability to balance income and costs.

How to structure your answer

Explain your approach step by step. Cover forecasting revenue from programs and hires, tracking expenses, monthly reviews, and adjusting when needed.

Example answer

"I start with last year's figures and break down expected income from court hire, programs, and memberships. Then I list fixed and variable costs like staff, utilities, and maintenance. I review actuals against the budget each month and flag any overspend early. If a program is not covering its costs, I either adjust fees or reshape the offering to use resources better."

5. Describe a time you had to manage a difficult customer or stakeholder.**Why they ask**

This assesses your communication and conflict resolution skills with members, clubs, or councils.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR. Focus on how you listened, found common ground, and kept the relationship positive.

Example answer

"A local club complained that their court allocation had been reduced for a school program. I met with their president, listened to their concerns, and explained the booking pressures. We agreed to swap some evening slots and I gave them first option on a new peak time. They left satisfied and continued to run their competitions at the centre."

6. How do you ensure compliance with safety and industry standards?**Why they ask**

This checks your knowledge of WHS and your ability to maintain a safe, compliant venue.

How to structure your answer

Outline your systematic approach: regular audits, staff training, documentation, and staying updated with regulations.

Example answer

"I run monthly safety checks on equipment, courts, and first aid supplies. I keep a register of all incidents and near misses, and I train staff in emergency procedures and first aid. I also stay up to date with WHS updates through my network and local council, and I review our procedures whenever a new standard comes in."