

# Club Cricket

## Junior Section Starter Pack

### Phase Three: Refining Your Junior Section



# Introduction

Cricket Scotland has embarked on a challenging Strategic Plan for Community Cricket in Scotland called 'All Together Better'. The key components of this plan are below:

Vision: "More players playing the game regularly in a network of strong clubs supported by well-trained and motivated people"

This vision is underpinned by 3 core objectives:

1. More and Better Players
2. Stronger Clubs
3. Well-Trained People.

Cricket Scotland understands that a key component to achieving the above objectives is the provision of junior cricket sections within clubs. Currently there are some excellent junior sections within clubs but both ESCA and Cricket Scotland are keen to encourage more clubs in the East to start a junior section and/or help them deliver a better junior section for the overall health and well-being of their club.

Cricket Scotland very much believes in the 'bottom up' approach to the sustainability of club cricket. If a club has a strong and thriving junior section then in the long term the overall strength of the club will only improve.

Cricket Scotland also recognises that starting a junior section is a considerable undertaking and that many clubs are seeking some advice on where to start. Hopefully, this guide can provide enthusiastic clubs with some direction in how to go about it. The format of the overall document will be the following:

- Phase One – Getting Started
- Phase Two – Developing
- Phase Three – Refining
- Documentation and Templates.

The intention is that this resource can provide the following:

- Allow you to get advice and use the templates that are needed for your club
- Give you a practical outline of how to get things started and develop your structures
- Have everything in clear, simple to follow documents that can be accessed easily on-line
- Reinforce that there's no right or wrong and that there's plenty of support available to you from Cricket Scotland.

Finally, if you're reading this then you're taking the initiative in starting or improving junior cricket at your club. The time and effort you put into your club is massively appreciated by ESCA and Cricket Scotland, and volunteers like you are the lifeblood of the game. If there's one piece of advice to come out of this document it's to work together and delegate. You won't be able to do it all yourself and for the overall good of the club, having a group of good volunteers will achieve far more than one on their own. Cricket Scotland believe junior cricket is hugely rewarding on many levels so remember to enjoy your involvement in inspiring and developing the next generation of young cricketers.

# Refining Your Junior Section

1. Refining Your Planning – Club Development Plan
2. Refining Your Coaching Programme
3. School/Clubs Links – Creating the Conveyor Belt
4. Improving Your Communication
5. More Playing Opportunities
6. Joining TOP Club

## Phase Three: Refining your Junior Section

The final section of this guide is called *Refining* and is all about putting the 'icing on the cake' so to speak. What's included in this section are really a series of recommendations and ideas that a strong Junior cricket club should be doing. While your club might not be able to or interested in doing all these, there might be a few things you pick out of here that would really help your club become the best it can be. Many of the actions are not absolutely crucial to the clubs survival but we they are very important if you want to have a really successful and sustainable junior programme.

### Refining Your Planning – Club Development Plan

Well organised clubs aspire to ensure they're well run and supported by local community members. Considering the position we hope your junior section is now in, Cricket Scotland recommend that you now form a development plan for junior cricket at your club. You need to have a clear idea of where you're at and where you want the junior section to go to be successful in the long term. The major benefits of making a plan include:

- Effective use of club resources – people, money, facilities
- Improved club culture – by involving representative members in decision making and ensuring everyone knows what the club is trying to achieve
- Developing sustainability – through long term planning and participation through improved recruitment, retention and support for members and volunteers
- Developing higher standards – with a more professional approach
- Transparency – effective planning will enhance current offers in terms of quality and/or in numbers participating. Whether consolidating or expanding, recruiting more members or improving services for existing members you should apply a simple and time-efficient planning process and take an informed, objective look at the club's future.

#### Starting Point – Think Big

*Vision* – what do you want the junior section to look like in 3-5 years' time? Be ambitious but realistic.

*Values* – what values will shape the culture of your club?

*Understanding your Club – SWOT analysis:*

- Strengths – discuss and identify the strengths of your junior section
- Weaknesses – identify areas that you need to improve
- Opportunities – identify how your club can possibly develop
- Threats – establish and recognise any challenges that may occur

**Top Tip**

Use the Cricket Scotland TOP Club files to help give you a broader understanding of what position your club is currently in - <http://www.cricketscotland.com/participation-news/top-club-programme/>

*Understanding Your Area* – you need to speak to people in your local community and ask the right questions so you understand what the needs and demands are in your area. You want to know that it will work first before committing to it.

*Goals/Objectives* – provide a short description of the steps you need to take to achieve the vision. Identify 4-5 key goals that will help you achieve your vision.

*Actions* – Outline the key tasks you will need to do for each goal.

*Put it Down on Paper* – put your thoughts and ideas down on paper in a clear and coherent manner. To help you do this, attached is an example Development Plan for you to look at and use as the basis for forming your club's plan.

*Communicate it* – to engage members and volunteers in your new junior section you need to share this plan to inspire them and get 'buy in' to your club's future. You also never know who could come forward to help you make your vision become a reality.

Things to remember when forming your plan:

- It doesn't have to be a big document – make it concise and to the point
- Distribute to all members to comment on
- It needs to be specific for your club and reflect where you want the club to go.

**Top Tip**

Contact your Regional Participation Manager to set up a meeting to help you with this process

Go to the *Templates and Resources* Section to find an example of a Club 5-Year Development Plan

Each local authority will also have a sports development team who will be able to assist you in this process and could be closer geographically than your cricket specific support.

# Refining Your Coaching Programme

The strength of your coaching programme is often the most crucial aspect of your junior club. If you can provide quality coaching from well qualified coaches that progress and enhances the kids' experience of cricket then you will be well on your way.

## Coach Development Plan

You need to invest in your coaches to help them develop, your players develop, and for them to feel valued and motivated. Working out how you will go about recruiting, developing and retaining your coaches each year is a very important component of running a successful junior section. If you can create an environment with plenty of qualified coaches that are always seeking improvement from themselves and their players your juniors will thrive.

We recommend taking the time to put together a brief Coach Development Plan. Again, this only has to be brief but it provides you with a clear plan to work from over the year to ensure you're always looking after your coaches. You may also have some coaches interested in developing their own 'Personal Development Plan'. If you have coaches interested in this please contact Cricket Scotland staff for information on how they can help in this process.

Attached in the *Templates and Resources* Section is a template Coach Development Plan for you to use.

### Top Tip

Coach development is one of the areas that you can easily access funding for to cover costs. Local Authorities, Sport Scotland, ESCA among many others offer grants to pay for coach development.

## Winter Coaching Programme

As stated earlier some of the best development work with youngsters can be done in the winter when you don't have the distraction of fixtures and they can work solely on their skills. We recommend putting in place a 'Winter Coaching Programme' for your juniors to attend in the lead up to the season that is skill based.

Logistics to consider for this:

- Sports hall hire
- Times
- Coaches to run the sessions
- Communicating with the kids
- Costs involved – cover hall hire, payment of coaches etc.

In terms of what the programme should entail, we would make the following broad recommendations:

- 6-8 week programme in the lead up to the start of the season
- Have kids put in similar age groups so you don't have big discrepancies between age and ability
- Concentrate on skill execution and repetition of good technique
- Cover the core skill areas and get them doing those very well
- Make it fun, interesting and challenging.



### Top Tip

- Talk to your local Development Officer or Regional Participation Manager about what this programme could look like and any assistance they can provide
- Appoint a ‘Head Coach’ or get funding to employ a qualified coach to lead the winter sessions for the club. Make use of their specialist skills during a period when skill development can be targeted
- Don’t be put off if you can’t access hardball indoor facilities. Good technical development can be done without a hardball so don’t let your facilities limit you!

## Employ a Head Coach

You might consider ways of employing a ‘Head Coach’ for your junior section over the summer. A well-qualified coach that has the interests of the club at heart can make a significant difference to the level of coaching occurring at your club. You could look at some of the following:

- Consider applying to ESCA for their ‘Head Coach’ grant to help you fund some coaching expertise
- Try to find a sponsor or additional funding within your budget to employ a ‘Head Coach’ for the club. Look to work in with the senior club and pool your resources for an overall Club Head Coach.

## Facilities

In order to deliver a quality junior programme you need to think about the facilities you’re providing. People are motivated by having access to good facilities and they also help improve the performance of your members. Your club may need to consider new nets, artificial wickets and booking indoor spaces among many facility requirements to continue to meet the demand of your members and provide a good coaching environment. For more information about how to improve the facilities for your growing club please contact your local Development Officer or Regional Participation Manager.

# School/Clubs Links – Creating the Conveyor Belt

## Cricket in the curriculum at schools

One way of further enhancing what you do at your local schools is by trying to get cricket in the curriculum at the local primary and secondary schools. If you can get a regular 4-6 week block of cricket each year at schools that fits in with their outcomes, then you will be consistently promoting the game and your club in your community.

### Top Tip

Contact your Regional Participation Manager for access to Cricket Scotland programmes that fit the school curriculum and can be delivered by suitable coaches.

## After School Cluster Clubs

Look to organise and provide 'Cluster Clubs' at a convenient venue for your local primary schools you're delivering in. This is a good way of providing a 'stepping stone' to them eventually joining your club.

Also, provide an 'After-School Club' at your local Secondary School and enter and coach a team in the 'Cricket Factory Cup' competition.

### Top Tip

The 'Cricket Factory Cup' competition and game format is a great way to introduce the game in Secondary Schools without much cricket going on. It's an adaptable and fun format that all students will enjoy. For more information on the format contact your local Development Officer or Regional Participation Manager.

## Teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

As part of your schools programme you could work with your 'Summer Squad' coach and local Development Officer to provide some CPD training for local school teachers. Getting them delivering and understanding cricket can only help the club get kids into the game and attract them to the club in the long term.

### Top Tip

Run a CPD course down at your club so they know where it is and create an affinity with their local club. Contact Cricket Scotland to provide staff to deliver to them and also provide resources and support.

## School Competitions or School Cluster teams

You may also consider setting up a regular 'inter-school competition' for your local primary schools that continues to promote the game and the club. If kids are consistently getting opportunities to play at the club in a comfortable environment (amongst kids from school that they know) then you can hopefully ease the transition for them to your club.

**Top Tip**

Hawick & Wilton CC in the Borders has run a very successful Saturday morning schools competition over many years. For more information on how they set this up check out their story in the *Templates and Resources* Section.

**Top Tip**

When dealing with any school it's vital that you consider your timings. Schools and Active School Coordinators need plenty of time to get organised so you can't just think you can get into a school whenever you like to deliver programmes. You need to be planning and making contact with them in July/August to be able to set up quality programmes for Mar-July the next year!

# Improving Your Communication

## Refining your website

Your club website should always be evolving to continue to engage your members. New information, updates and relevant new sections should continually be added and updated. Some ways to also help get better value for your website are:

- Get Listed – as soon as your site is available on the internet you can submit it to Google by completing the add URL form at [www.google.com/addurl.html](http://www.google.com/addurl.html)
- Improve your page rank – publicise your site to everyone with whom you communicate. Add your site's web address to every piece of communication – letters, newsletters, brochures, emails etc
- Link your website with other websites e.g. Cricket Scotland, ESCA.

## Newsletter

Providing a regular newsletter to your members is a good way to constantly engage with them and keep them up-to-date with all happenings at the club. People appreciate knowing what's happening and regularly keeping them involved and 'in the know' is a good way to retain people at the club.

### Top Tip

Put your newsletter on your club website but also tweet the link to all your members for easy access.

# More Playing Opportunities

## Summer Holiday Programme

You may like to consider running summer and/or spring holiday programmes at your club. This is a great way to keep your junior members engaged and also attract new children to your club. Camps can also be an excellent new revenue stream from the club as the demand for these opportunities is usually high.

## Entering Scottish Cup Competitions

Hopefully, by this stage you've established some hardball teams at your club and have been competing in friendlies and local league fixtures. Another extension from this is to enter your team(s) in the Scottish Age Group Cup Competitions at U13, U15 and U18 level. The juniors love the idea of playing in a National Competition and potentially having the opportunity to play against teams from all around the country.



## Organising a Tour or playing at a Festival

You may also like to consider organising a 'mini-tour' or playing in one of the many junior 'Cricket Tournaments' held around the UK. The opportunity to go away and play multiple games in a good environment is a great development opportunity for your players and they will absolutely love the experience. For ideas or assistance on setting up these type of opportunities contact your Regional Participation Manager.

### Top Tip

Grange CC attends the Shrewsbury Cricket Festival in July each year. This is a great development opportunity and for more information on how they organise it please contact the club.

## Joining TOP Club

As this point your club may wish to explore the opportunity of joining Cricket Scotland's 'TOP Club' accreditation scheme. This is a scheme aimed at helping clubs work towards a strong and sustainable future. It involves support from your local Participation Manager and is a useful process in the development of your club.

For more information on TOP Club contact your Regional Participation Manager.

### Top Tip

To find out more about TOP Club and what it involves, check out the information on the Cricket Scotland website on this link - <http://www.cricketscotland.com/participation-news/top-club-programme/>