

# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGY



The junior sport framework acknowledges that young people play sport to:

- To have fun with friends;
- For excitement and enjoyment;
- To experience challenge, achievement and personal responsibility;
- To use and improve upon their skills.

Young people and their parents want a safe and supportive environment which encourages them to do their best. They enjoy sport when:

- There is NOT an over-emphasis on winning;
- They get enough 'on field' playing time;
- They have enough fun;
- They play with their friends;
- They are NOT frightened of being hurt;
- The coaches are NOT over bearing; and
- The coaches use constructive criticism.

Clubs through the Junior Framework are encouraged to think creatively in regard to the way in which sport is presented to young people and their parents, the range of activities children are exposed to, their level of activity while playing sport and the fun they have while doing so.

Responding to these well-established 'drivers' will ensure your club is well positioned to:

- Attract young people to the sport;
- Deliver some fantastically positive sport experiences;
- Increase the likelihood these same young people will retain their interest and involvement in the sport.

## **Key Framework Guidelines**

Be targeted in the recruitment programs. Use methods which work and deploy resources to:

- Undertake the general promotion of the club – be consistent and persistent in promoting the club and the sport
- Develop a strong communication plan – one that talks to both parents and their children.
- Deploy appropriate funds and resources in support of your recruitment drives; give the recruitment activities their best chance of success
- 'Fish where the fish are' – be optimistic but realistic
- Build incentives to attract people's attention

# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGY



Retention will be improved when clubs focus on:

- Providing a great experience each and every time for young people and their parents
- Managing and delivering on parent's expectations
- Providing pathways for young players
- Providing quality coaching to all young players
- Communication, communication, communication
- Rewarding and recognise all young players
- Ensuring all young people 'get a go'

## General Tips

- Use resources wisely. Be targeted in what you undertake, better resourced activities will deliver better outcomes.
- Clubs working collectively within a region will often produce better outcomes than each club working independently. Learning from others success and mistakes will make the junior programs stronger.
- Measure what you do. If something works- support it – don't repeat mistakes. For example, monitor your success with different recruitment strategies, monitor your success with retention (how many stay with the club year after year)
- Be inclusive of parents and their children. Making an impression and delivering a positive experience should be a goal for both parents and young footballers.
- Put some effort into developing and strengthening your

## RETENTION Strategies

The ideas. . . . Some successful strategies

The experience . . .

- For young players it should all be about fun, fun, fun – at both training and in competition
- Let them share the experience with friends – organise teams to allow young people to play with their friends
- Rotate kids through all positions – let 'everyone do everything'
- Ensure there are high activity levels
- Provide social activities that help strengthen relationships between kids and the club
- Provide social opportunities that immerse parents with their kids in the sport and the club

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## Managing and delivering on parent's expectations

- Provide a welcoming environment for all parents
- Ensure they also have a 'fun' experience – use social activities to promote this experience
- Present the club professionally to all parents – good presentation, well organised, excellent communications
- Take a 'whole of family' view – use activities which encourage all the family to be involved

## Pathways

- Communicate the development and talent pathways available
- Provide opportunities for all players, regardless of their abilities Coaching
- Acknowledge the coach is the 'face' of the club for both parents and kids
- Ensure coaches support the club values in regards juniors and the experience
- Place time and effort into your coaches, provide development opportunities and feed their passion to learn.

## Information – communication, communication, communication

- Develop an effective communication strategy utilising technology (SMS Websites, Email Templates, Website etc)
- Good retention will be helped by regular communication with parents and young people
- Ensure you monitor how successful you are in keeping young people from year to year
- Consider using regular surveys to monitor the 'satisfaction' of both kids and parents with what the club is delivering
- Reward & recognition
- Encouragement awards
- Weekly awards
- Awards and recognition for all players
- Participation awards

## RECRUITMENT Strategies

The ideas. . . . Some successful strategies

### Schools

- Recruitment through the schools will be based on strong relationships

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- Use your clubs Development Staff to be the face of the game at school and community level or ask the State Body for resources.
- Consider using ads in the school newsletter to promote local junior competitions
- Use incentives to encourage schools to support the junior football programs (incentives linked to registration at clubs)
- Integrate school programs with club activities and competitions

### General Promotion

- Shopping centre promotions
- Local area flyer drops
- Newsletters
- Club website
- Take the game to the people – preseason games in different locations?

### Media Promotion

- Recruitment ads in the local press
- Use feature articles on successful members to kick start recruitment
- Media releases notifying of recruitment days and other club activities

### Parents

- First impression of parents is critical
- Provide an introduction and welcome letters to parents as well as kids
- Provide welcome packs for parents including information about the club, its history, the rules, codes of behaviour, contact points etc.
- Use a welcome BBQ or social experience to provide a positive first experience for parents
- Communicate club values and the 'points of difference' of your sport – safety, inclusive, a game for all, high involvement, focus on fun

### Club Activities

#### Undertake general promotion and marketing of the club

- Flyers
- The club website
- Local community activities – presence at festivals, shopping centres
- Social Media

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### Develop a strong communication plan

- Provide easy access to the club (phone contact, website etc)
- Easy access to club representatives, competition timetables, details about the club
- First name basis with juniors and parents
- Be 'regular' in your communication with juniors and parents

### Recruitment drives

- Use resources carefully (select a few and do these well)
- Come and Try days
- Participation days
- Social events
- Leverage points of interest – inclusive, fun, family orientated, boys and girls etc
- Leverage off the back of community centres i.e host last week of community centre at your venue

### Fish where the fish are

- Siblings of existing players
- Friends of existing players
- Mate bring mate days
- Promote 'whole of family' focus

### Incentives

- Welcome packs – reinforce the decision to join the club
- 'Sampler' opportunities – the option to try before they buy
- Reinforce the value for money of your club
- Word of mouth

For more information or assistance with implementing any of these ideas contact Softball Victoria at [info@softballvic.org.au](mailto:info@softballvic.org.au) or on 03 9415 1745.