



GUIDE TO SETTING UP A JUNIOR PLAYER LEADERSHIP GROUP

This resource outlines considerations for cricket clubs when developing a Junior Player Leadership Group. This resource can be used in conjunction with a case study video on Quinns Rocks Junior Cricket Club's Junior Player Leadership Group.

WHY CREATE A JUNIOR PLAYER LEADERSHIP GROUP?

The purpose of a Junior Player Leadership Group (JPLG) is to provide a forum for junior players to discuss ideas and initiatives that will help the club to better fulfil its mission and achieve its vision. Participation in meetings of the JPLG will provide leadership and development opportunities for junior players, while introducing them to aspects of committees, volunteer management and club administration.

The benefits of a JPLG extend to enhancing the experience of junior players so they feel empowered. Research shows that when children feel empowered and are involved in decision making, they become more independent, resilient, and confident to speak up if they feel unsafe. They may also feel more confident with the adults within the club, making the environment more trusting and supportive.

HOW DO WE CHOOSE GROUP MEMBERS?

At the start of the season, coaches and team managers can be invited to nominate players from their team who they believe would enjoy being part of and benefit from belonging to the JPLG. The club committee will review the nominations and appoint players to the JPLG for a period of 12 months or 24 months. The ideal group size is 6-8. The ideal age of participation is 13-17.

The JPLG should be created with diversity in mind to ensure the various experiences, backgrounds and abilities of juniors are captured in discussions. Some children and young people are at more risk of harm in organisations, including those who are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, have a disability, are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background or identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer. The club committee should consider how the diversity within the junior members of the club can be represented in the JPLG.

As a guide to coaches and team managers, a player nominated for the JPLG should exhibit some or all of the following characteristics:

- Supportive team member
- Ability to listen
- Good communication skills
- Regular attendance at training and games
- Interest in volunteering, leadership, management or club administration

It is considered best practice for the club to have written consent from a parent/guardian for their child's participation in the JPLG. This can be done by email or text message.

HOW OFTEN WOULD THE JPLG MEET?

Meetings of the JPLG would typically last approximately 1 hour. Four meetings would be held within each 12-month period, in line with important phases of the cricket season;

- November (start of season)
- January/February (mid-season)
- May (season review)
- September (pre-season)

Meetings will be facilitated by a JPLG Coordinator appointed by the club committee. Having two adults present is recommended so that one person can facilitate the discussion and one can take notes.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

Meetings of the JPLG can be focused on issues of importance to junior players. Items discussed may generally align with the major pillars of the club's strategic plan (i.e. People, Pathways, Places, Promotion, etc.) and might include topics such as:

- Player game day experience
- Player support mechanisms/networks
- Uniform and merchandise
- Inclusion and diversity
- Leadership and pathways
- Recognition and retention
- Community involvement
- Team and club events
- Club values and strategic planning
- Creating a safe club environment

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF JUNIORS AND ADULTS?

Members of the JPLG would be expected to attend meetings and to share and discuss their ideas whilst also representing the ideas and views of their teammates.

The JPLG Coordinator and other adults involved are expected to build empowering relationships with the junior members of the group. This means demonstrating they trust and care for children, listen intently, follow up on what they say they will do, and adhere to relevant boundaries as outlined in the Australian Cricket Safeguarding Children & Young People policy and Code of Behaviour. Parents would be expected to provide transport to and from meetings of the JPLG. Parents are also welcomed to view the proceedings of a JPLG meeting, remembering that this is an opportunity for players to develop their leadership abilities in a supportive and encouraging environment.

HOW DO WE REWARD PLAYERS FOR THEIR EFFORT?

Members of the JPLG should receive recognition of their contribution to their club and the community. Examples include a certificate and letter of commendation, an embroidered badge that can be sewn onto their playing shirts, inclusion on honour boards, special mentions at the Annual General Meeting, or by any other means.

A bit more about the benefits:

Every club is different, and every JPLG will have a different look and feel, yet the various benefits will be consistent and may include:

- Players meet players from other teams
- Players are more confident to speak up
- Juniors have an increased sense of ownership and belonging at the club, which in turn increases sense and feeling of safety
- Juniors have a higher sense of self-worth and resilience
- The club has a member-centred approach
- Increased attendance at club events
- Building up the next generation of club volunteers