



Disability Education Newsletter

November - December 2014



Cricket Australia launches *All Abilities* strategy

In time for this year's International Day of People with a Disability, Cricket Australia launched its *All Abilities* strategy in partnership with Queensland Cricket. Supporting the sport's drive to be a 'game for everyone' this national strategy has been developed to grow disability participation at all levels of cricket.

Clear pathways have been outlined in both the participation and high performance streams. This will ensure continued engagement with the disability community at the grassroots level as well as structures to assist talented cricketers with a disability to reach their full potential in the sport.



The national organisation will work in partnership with its state/territory bodies to develop an All-Abilities Field Force, including the development of school and community-based ambassadors. This Field Force will drive participation targets through the existing Milo in2CRICKET and Milo T20 Blast social and participation based programs.

A *Sport for All* resource has been developed to assist clubs and private providers to become more welcoming and inclusive of people of all abilities and backgrounds as participants from the entry-level programs are directed into the club and indoor cricket systems. Coach education and 'Club Assist' initiatives are also aimed at improving the quality of the player experience.

The strengthening of relationships with existing cricket stakeholders like Deaf Cricket Australia, Blind Cricket Australia and the Lord's Taverners (indoor cricket) will serve to provide a robust support structure and recognition for cricketers of all abilities. Existing national and international pathways for these stakeholders will be aligned with the national high performance pathway. The development of state/territory and national squads, the establishment of a national All Abilities Championships and new scholarships will showcase and accelerate All Abilities cricket talent.



Through the development of its All Abilities strategy Cricket Australia is showing its understanding of the responsibility of national sporting organisations to ensure their sports are accessible and inclusive of all Australians. The implementation of this strategy over the next four years in conjunction with state/territory bodies will demonstrate the sport's commitment to making a difference to lives of Australians with a disability through being a force for social change in the community.

For more information about Queensland Cricket's inclusive initiatives, contact Paul Frederickson on (07) 3292 3109 or email: paulf@qldcricket.com.au

Jamie-Lee Lewis, from pool to paddock and beyond



Representing Australia in a sporting arena has always been a motivating force for the competitive spirit of Jamie-Lee Lewis. An athlete from an early age (her mother recalls her kicking strongly inside the womb), Jamie-Lee was always looking for opportunities to quench her competitive thirst.

After watching the Sydney 2000 Olympics she confidently declared that she wanted to compete in every Olympic sport and would try any sport possible, telling her parents that each was her “new love”.

Ironically, the only sport she was reluctant to play as a shy adolescent was water polo however, with her mother encouraging her to give it a go and with the support of coaches and teammates, she soon excelled, making representative state and, ultimately, national teams.

While an incredible achievement for any young person, Jamie-Lee has ascended to this elite level of sport with an added challenge. She was diagnosed as profoundly deaf at the age of one receiving a cochlear implant when she was four. Cochlear implants can help someone who is profoundly deaf or severely hard of hearing to perceive sound but may not completely restore their hearing, therefore in the pool Jamie-Lee relies on her sight to know what is happening with the players and referees. Her determination to overcome this challenge led her to becoming the first deaf person to represent Australia in a hearing sport along with a host of other sporting awards and accolades including a nomination for the 2015 Young Australian of the Year.

Despite her headline-making achievements she hasn't quite reached her goal of making it to the Olympics. However, after experiencing a shoulder injury and taking a hiatus from water polo, she has discovered rugby 7s, a sport that happens to be making its Olympic debut in Rio 2016. She is currently training and playing with the Queensland Reds 7s development squad and is hopeful she'll have a chance at making the team for Rio.



Individual Olympic dreams are not all that drive Jamie-Lee though. She is passionate about ensuring kids with hearing impairments, and other disabilities, enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle and manages to balance her work, training and therapy routine with regular public speaking engagements. She is an ambassador for several different organisations including two that are focused on getting kids with a disability involved in sport: Deaf Sports Australia's, *Active Deaf Kids* program and the latest addition to her ambassador portfolio, Brisbane based, *League and Learn*. “Sport has helped me become a better person and enjoy a healthy life. Being deaf or hearing impaired shouldn't stop you from playing sports,” Jamie-Lee says.

Thanks to Jamie-Lee's passion and dedication, many more kids will have the confidence and opportunity to participate in the pool, on the paddock or in any sporting arena.

For more information about the sporting programs for which Jamie-Lee is currently an ambassador, please visit: www.activedeafkids.org.au or www.leagueandlearn.com.au

Kanako Weightman: A young athlete having fun with dual sporting dreams

At just 10 years of age, Townsville athlete Kanako Weightman has had a huge year competing at her first national titles. Kanako has two sporting dreams, to compete in the Paralympics in track and field, and to compete in the Olympics through hockey.

Born in Japan, Kanako has lived in Townsville since 2008. That year she was diagnosed with a brain tumour and, as a result of surgery, was left with a permanent disability affecting the right side of her body. Kanako had to wear a brace on her leg and often on her arm. "It was very uncomfortable and hot in summer but it didn't stop me from playing and enjoying outside activities with my friends at lunchtime or participating in PE classes", she says.



At this year's Townsville Challenge Games for athletes with a disability Kanako qualified for the Athletics Primary School State Track and Field Championships. She won gold medals in the 100m, 200m, long jump and the 4x100m relay. She went on to compete in each of these events at the National Championships winning a further gold, silver and bronze medal and setting three national records.

Kanako's other sporting love, hockey, is a little different. In athletics, Kanako has a classification which means, while she can compete against able-bodied competitors, she is actually more often racing with same-aged athletes in multi-disability events. In hockey, Kanako is participating alongside and against able-bodied athletes.



"I have been playing hockey for five years, with two different clubs in that time, but I have been with Townsville Wests for three years now", she says. In the under 11 competition, Kanako's team drew in the grand final, and she was given an honourable mention for the outstanding game she played. "Before I started playing hockey, I was visiting the physiotherapist to help improve the movement in my right arm. My mum and dad saw an ad in the school newsletter, and they wanted me to play a sport where I would have to use both my hands".

There have been some challenges along the way. Standard hockey sticks are made for use in the right hand. "This wasn't a problem when I was playing a position on the field as I would use two hands; however my favourite position (goalkeeper) meant I would try to spread my stance and had to hold the stick in one hand. This had to be my left hand as I didn't have the strength to hold it in my right". The gloves for goalies are also specific for the right hand. "I would play with the stick in my left hand, but have it upside down, and I couldn't wear a glove on my left hand".

Kanako was lucky to get a helping hand from Hannah Astbury, a recent Under 18 Queensland representative hockey player. Hannah is a specialist goalkeeper and provided some extra goalkeeping coaching for Kanako. Hannah's parents made Kanako a specialised left handed goalkeeper's stick. "They also made me a glove that I could use to protect my hand from the ball". Kanako said.

When asked what she liked most about hockey, Kanako replied, "It's lots of fun".



Scope of education and awareness sessions widens

Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association has long been involved in engaging and educating sport, recreation and fitness communities around inclusive practices for people of all abilities. This year, a range of requests have been received from organisations in other sectors for disability or sport awareness presentations.

A number of sessions have been provided for organisations in the disability sector. This has assisted these organisations to better understand the spectrum of opportunity available for their service users to connect to sport and recreation options in the community, including programs and services available through Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association. As these organisations prepare for the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, partnerships with inclusive sport and recreation providers will assist them to offer a broader scope of service for community access.

Similarly schools and hospital rehabilitation programs are appreciating the benefits of sport and healthy activity for all-round physical, social and emotional health. Through disability and sport awareness sessions they are able to gain a better understanding of the range of ways that children and adults can connect to these opportunities as they transition from their settings into community life.

Association *Game Changers*, inspiring speakers with a disability who share their own stories of participation in sport, have been requested for a diverse range of sessions this year. In addition to the school and hospital sessions, these have included presentations for family support groups, local access committees, advocacy organisations and government departments in Brisbane and Cairns celebrating International Day of People with a Disability.



Association Game Changer, Kobie Donovan, sharing her sport story

Over 90 education, awareness and community engagement sessions were provided by the Association in 2014.

For more information about booking an education or awareness session contact Community Engagement and Education Manager, Jenny Frowd, on (07) 3253 3333 or email: sportsconnect@sportingwheelies.org.au

The Sports CONNECT Queensland Network is coordinated by Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association

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