



**CRICKET
SCOTLAND**

Junior Cricket Starter Pack – Getting Started

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Introduction

Cricket Scotland are keen to encourage more clubs to start a junior section and/or help them deliver a better junior section for the overall health and well-being of their club.

We very much believe 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.

We also recognise 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

We hope 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 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. We 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.

Phase One: Getting Started

Understanding Your Needs and Opportunities

Why start a Junior Section?

For many clubs the thought of starting a junior section can be quite intimidating. While many would like to have juniors they simply don't know where to start. The first thing in deciding whether to start a junior section is to understand the benefits of having one at your club. We believe that the benefits to clubs of having a junior section include:

- Ensuring the long term sustainability of the club by having a regular influx of new members
- Providing a great service to the local community and giving kids the opportunity to develop a life-long love of cricket
- Ability to bring more money into the club to develop services for your whole club
- Satisfaction of seeing young people being active, enjoying themselves and having success
- Improving your club membership as a whole and access to more volunteers
- Improved club culture

Cricket Scotland strongly believes that a healthy, sustainable club by definition has to have juniors. We fully encourage every club to provide the best junior programme they can and our staff are committed to helping you achieve that.

To find out if there is an opportunity for a junior section you need to:

1. Firstly clarify if there is a local opportunity. Is there a group of people at the club or within the local community i.e. schools, youth groups, community groups, that are interested in the activity being proposed
2. Find out where the nearest junior cricket club can be found. The reason for this is to ensure that you don't duplicate an already existing junior club. If a junior section already exists it may be more appropriate to signpost players to this club if they can accommodate them rather than starting a new junior section. If the club are already at capacity then it is time to take the next step. The important part of this process is that you build partnerships that complement the local need.
3. Find out what other sport provision is in your area and when they take place. Is there a gap available to you that will be successful?
4. Clarify if you have enough interested volunteers to start the junior section at your club. There is a minimum number of people required to make any junior section viable – it can't all be done by one person!

If you've been able to answer yes to the above questions, then you should continue on the path to setting up your new junior section

Top Tip

- Contact your local council and their `Community Learning & Development Teams` for information on community groups in your area
- Talk to the other local clubs and Active Schools Coordinators in your area to find out what the sporting landscape is like and when best to run cricket

Advice – Who can support you?

Before progressing any further we recommend you consider asking for support and help from one or all of the following to help you start your junior section:

1. Your local Cricket Development Officer or Regional Participation Manager
2. Active School Coordinators – if you need help finding more young people for your club get in touch with your local Active Schools Coordinator who are always looking for new volunteers and clubs to link with. We advise that you contact them through your local Development Officer or Regional Participation Manager
3. A local club – sometimes the best people to speak to are other clubs that may have just completed the process you are about to begin

Top Tip

Local Development Officers and Regional Managers are there to support you so make contact right from the start. They can offer advice, resources and have a network of contacts to help you out

Getting a Junior Group Together

No doubt once you've made the decision to start your club junior section you will have grandiose plans and visions of what you would like to do. While this is very much encouraged we recommend that you also take a step back and be realistic about what you want to achieve in your first year and what help you need to make it happen. This is a crucial point in the success of your junior section as the most common reason for a junior section folding is a lack of volunteers to make it work. Often this happens when one person takes on so much and ends up doing everything, and when they move on, the junior sections folds with it. Therefore, getting a group of like-minded people together at the start and sharing the workload will hopefully safeguard against this but also make your involvement more enjoyable – many hands make light work!

Therefore, at this point you need to identify some supporters to help you along the way. This doesn't have to be a formal committee or anything at this stage, simply people interested in providing junior cricket at the club. We would recommend trying some of the following groups to find volunteers:

- Parents of children who have expressed an interest in playing
- Members of the senior club that have children wanting to get involved
- Members of the senior club that would like to give back to the game
- Teachers and/or Sport Specialists at local schools

Remember there's many ways in which they can help you, including:

- Coordinating databases and taking registers
- Coaching
- Assistant coaching
- Managing a team
- Coordinating equipment and gear
- First Aid and/or Child welfare
- Communicating with parents and kids
- Helping to get funding

Top Tip

Make sure you take the opportunity to get keen parents involved if they show any interest, and just as importantly, in a role they're comfortable with. If they are doing something they're competent at or enjoy doing then they're more likely to stay involved over a longer period of time

We also believe that it's crucial when approaching these people that you do the following:

- Outline the vision you have for the junior section and inspire them to be part of it
- Make them clear on the commitment they will need to make e.g. how often the kids will train
- Give them a clear role so they have a small area of responsibility and don't feel like they're going to be overwhelmed
- Give them plenty of support and reiterate that it will be a team effort to make this work

Top Tip

Invite the people you would like to get involved around for BBQ or down to the club for a drink to talk to them about getting involved. A relaxed atmosphere will make them more comfortable and also seeing a group of people will show them that they won't be lumped with everything and that it will be a team effort

What Facilities and Equipment will you need?

Ground

In most cases, this would simply be at the cricket club itself. However, in some cases you might not have a 'home' ground or suitable facilities for the juniors. If this is the case, consider the following:

- A local school
- A local sports hall
- Fields or courts that could be used or hired by the club

- A public park – many parks are available to be used for practices. Check with the local council
- Universities or Colleges
- Larger community clubs may even be keen to build a partnership with you that involves sharing facilities

Whatever venue you decide on you need to make sure you have the following:

- Toilet facilities available
- The amount of space you will need – how many teams will you have, can they all play at the same time
- Are there suitable cricket facilities available – nets, artificial pitch

Equipment

In preparation for starting a junior section you need to make sure you have suitable equipment for the kids to use. We recommend you start at Kwik Cricket level, and therefore, need to source this equipment. You should get the following:

- 2/3 sets of Kwik Cricket equipment – each set should have 2 sets of stumps, 2 bats and balls
- Cones – approximately 20-30
- Bag of balls – tennis or `wind balls` – the more the better but a bag of 20 is easy to source

This will give you the ability to get started with juniors and any additional equipment you can source will only enhance the experience for the kids.

Top Tip

You could try applying to the following organisations for equipment:

- Local Authority club funding schemes
- Awards for All grants through sportscotland
- Cricket Scotland Development Trust – www.csdtd.org.uk

Fees – what to charge?

We always recommend trying to remove as many barriers as possible to participation, and cost is often the most significant one. So if you're able to offer your junior section at a low cost or even for free initially, it should help you attract more members. However, it is important to keep in mind that we need to value our product and eventually you will hope to expand what you're doing which will inevitably mean more costs. Therefore, in the future a `Junior Fee` is to be expected but we need to make sure it's reasonable and not prohibitive.

Our suggestions regarding fees in the *Getting Started* phase are the following:

- If you can make it free initially then do so. Try to remove all barriers when you're getting started as you need to attract a base of players first. However, set expectations from the start that the `free` nature is only for a trial period as eventually there will be some cost and you should be up front about it.
- Try canvassing some of the other local clubs to find out how much they charge their juniors and/or how they cover costs of the junior section
- If you need to charge players, then communicate this clearly from the start and offer different methods of payment

Top Tip

Remember, not everyone who volunteers wants to coach and are more than happy to fulfil other roles. Put an organised and trustworthy parent in charge of fees collection so it's one less job for you to do. Get them to set a deadline for fees payment and give them contact details to chase up members

Coaching and Volunteering

Coaches are an essential part of starting a junior section at your club. They determine the experience kids will have at your club, and ultimately, whether the kids come back again next summer. You need to make sure you have the appropriate number of qualified coaches at your club before you start delivering to your juniors.

Some ideas on how to recruit coaches for your junior section:

- Recruit from your membership - this is the most common way to get an initial group of coaches together. Either through parents involved in the senior club, senior players wanting to give back to the game, high school or university students wanting to help out
- Advertise opportunities through local media, winter sports clubs, schools, club contacts
- Use word of mouth - your members have networks of friends that may be interested or have a skill set that you could use
- Make use of all the volunteering organisations that are out there. There are many people involved in these groups that are ready and willing to help your club

Top Tip

Here's a list of volunteering organisations you could try:

- Volunteer Scotland – www.volunteerscotland.org.uk
- Make use of the Volunteering Zone – www.volunteeringzone.org.uk
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations – www.scvo.org.uk

Some considerations when identifying your coaches and what they should do in the first year:

- You should aim to have approximately 1 coach or coach assistant to every 8 kids. If you can increase the ratio of coaches then this will only make things better
- The coaches need to be enthusiastic and approachable – you want them to encourage the kids AND parents
- Coaches need to be reliable and on time – first impression count
- Focus has to be on fun, participation and learning the basics – if your coaches ensure the kids want to turn up to cricket every week and have a great time, then they're doing their job!
- You may want to consider paying your qualified coaches. This can help to ensure they turn up and also reward and help retain them. Carefully consider this before committing to it and think about how you will find the resource and who you're prepared to pay.

Top Tip

- Get coaches to pair up with a group of kids so less experienced coaches can learn off the other coach
- Encourage young players from senior teams to help out with the juniors – the young kids identify with them and the young players are more likely to stay involved with coaching at the club
- Don't make training sessions too long – try and incorporate a little bit of skill work each night and then lots of games and fun
- Sometimes the best time to do skill development work is over the winter in a sports hall. Remember you don't have to have nets and use a hardball to do skill development
- Practices don't always have to be strictly cricket based – games and drills that build up basic movement skills and athletic development are very good as well, especially for young kids
- Teach them 'how' to play the game properly. If they understand how to play Kwik Cricket then they're more likely to have success and want to keep playing
- Don't be afraid to introduce matches for the kids quite early. They want to play games against others and they will learn loads doing so

Once you've identified the coaches for your new junior section you should contact your local Regional Participation Manager about upcoming coaching courses so they can become qualified and improve their coaching skills. We would recommend training up at least 3/4 coaches in preparation for your influx of juniors. A Kwik Cricket Managers Course and/or ICC Introduction to Cricket Coaching Course are appropriate for coaches starting out. Cricket Scotland can

come to your club to deliver these so please contact your Regional Participation Manager for information on this.

Welcome Meeting for Coaches

A welcome meeting is a good way of breaking the ice and clearly outlining the expectations of coaches. You should cover the following:

- Who's looking after what age group
- Expectations at practice and any resources you can provide them
- Training nights/times and any matches
- Where they get equipment and gear
- Instruction on use of facilities and equipment
- A summary of the club risk assessment pertinent to them
- Registers, Incident report forms and their procedures
- Child protection policy

Top Tip

Hold your meeting before the start of the season and make it relaxed and informal – you don't want to scare anyone off!

Child Protection

One of the unavoidable pieces of paperwork involved in setting up your junior section is around Child Protection. Your club may already have something like this in place but if not, attached with this pack is a Child Protection Policy template that you can adapt for your club.

You also need to appoint a named contact to co-ordinate child protection within your club who has attended 'Safeguarding & Protecting Children' or other basic child protection awareness training and the 'In Safe Hands - Club Child Protection Officer' workshop. Your Child Protection Officer should be someone who doesn't work directly with the children or vulnerable groups at your club i.e. preferable not a coach.

Also tied in with this is health and safety. The key considerations here is around making sure you've done risks assessments that are well documented and the key actions communicated to volunteers. A risk assessment template is available in the *Templates and Resources* section.

Top Tip

Your CPO should be someone who doesn't work directly with the children so someone like your club Treasurer or Secretary could be a good candidates. You need someone who is organised and good at following processes

Why is this important?

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure children are safe from harm. In your club the Child Protection Officer will be the main point of contact to make it easy for everyone to know who to go to if they need support, advice or training or if they need to report a concern. They will `champion` good practice and ensure consistency in safeguarding children.

Training for Child Protection Officers

Below are the courses available regarding Child Protection:

- Safeguarding & Protecting Children basic awareness workshops
- Safeguarding & Protecting Children 2 workshop
- In Safe Hands – Club Child Protection Officer Workshop
- Supporting Clubs Workshop

For more information on what's appropriate for your club or for any clarification on the courses please contact Cricket Scotland Child Protection Officer, Colin McDougall - childprotection@cricketscotland.com

Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme - PVGs

You also need to make sure that all your coaches and volunteers have PVGs to be able to work with young people. The club has to have a Secondary Contract with Cricket Scotland before they can register any coaches on the PVG scheme. To set up this contract, and to get forms and advice on PVGs for your coaches/volunteers, please contact Ramsay Allan at Cricket Scotland - ramsayallan@cricketscotland.com

Top Tip

Organise a time to do all your Child Protection paperwork at one time with all coaches and volunteers. Everyone can fill out PVG forms together and you can answer all questions at the same time. This will save a lot of chasing up in the long run!

Getting Children to your club

You should now be at a point where you just need to get some children to the club - no easy feat! You hopefully already have some interested juniors to begin the section but to attract a base of players to make a meaningful junior section some ways of attracting players could be:

- Advertise in local media – newspapers, community news, radio
- Advertise through other local sports club e.g. winter codes – football, rugby, hockey. You could look to work together to run festivals and other promotions

- Make contact with Community Youth Groups and other such organisations. These already have interested youngsters signing up to activities so are more likely to come and try cricket
- Advertise and promote in local schools – and don't be discouraged if you're not hugely successful straight away, you have to be persistent

The last recommendation we believe is the most important. Clubs with strong links to their schools are generally healthy, vibrant clubs that have a steady influx of youngsters each year. If you can deliver some cricket in the local schools and make the children aware of the opportunities your club can offer then you will have the best chance of attracting a steady stream of youngsters to your club. Some things to consider when approaching this:

- Active Schools Managers and Coordinators develop effective pathways between schools and cricket clubs to support the transition from school to community sport
- Does your club have the capacity to develop a strong school club link (i.e. qualified coaches, adequate space in your facilities and appropriate safeguarding policies in place)
- School club links can increase a club membership and provide further sporting opportunities for children and young people

In the first year, you may decide to only organise to go in and deliver some fun taster sessions at a couple of local schools and distribute some flyers to get your club on the map. You may only have limited success initially but we strongly believe if you start this process as early as you can and put the time and effort into maintaining a good relationship with the schools you will eventually reap the rewards. In the coming years your impact at the schools can grow as you develop as a junior club and your reputation is enhanced.

Top Tip

Advice contacting your local school

- More often than not you will be directed to Active Schools Coordinators
- When contacting your school remember to provide key details about your club. This should include who you are, contact details and what your local club are aiming to do.
- Contact your local Cricket Development Officer or Regional Participation Manager for assistance in starting this relationship
- Other staff that may be interested in your club may include teachers and head teachers so it's important that you present yourself and your club professionally to help the school guide you to the most appropriate member of staff that can deal with your request
- Where possible formalise your relationship with a school through a 'School Partnership Agreement' - Cricket Scotland can provide templates for this
- You can look up your local Active Schools Coordinators by searching online for Active Schools followed by the name of your local authority
- For additional information and guidance go to the 'Help for Clubs' section on the Sport Scotland website – www.sportscotland.org.uk

Top Tip

Edinburgh South CC is a club that have started a Junior Section from scratch in the last few years. They have done some outstanding work in creating a Community Sports Hub at their Inch Park Facility and finding out what they've been through could be worthwhile. Their story is available in the *Templates and Resources* section included with the overall Club Starter Pack



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