



A Personal Perspective from Tunbridge Wells Cricket Club

December 2015



Starting and Developing a Girls' section at your cricket club

Headlines

Perhaps your club has never seriously considered a women's and girls' section. If not, please take a moment to read this short presentation – a personal perspective from Tunbridge Wells Cricket Club. The benefits to our club have been incredible – we have now created a 'virtuous cycle'.



Financial

- One third of all youth revenue (c.£9,000) is from our girls.
- We now have an adult team with a squad of more than 20.
- Sponsorship and endorsements have multiplied.
- Social & fundraising income has grown significantly. The bar is busier!



A New Dynamic - women and girls bring a fantastic new dynamic and a glamorous dimension to the club. We have a great inclusive feel.

Coaching & Administration – lots more willing helpers.

More players – our adult girls are playing in men's teams, doing well and loving it.

Publicity – as we grow, we improve. As we improve, we attract social and print media interest. This attracts more and better players.

“Build and they will come”

From humble beginnings in 2010, Tunbridge Wells has grown its girls’ section from about 10 to over 100 players today. Not every club will have the facilities or desire to attract so many female members. But it demonstrates that with careful planning and the right approach, the demand is there. Our junior section is now at capacity.

In our experience, the benefits of a girls’ section are immeasurable. Here are a few:

Clubs need volunteers. A Women’s and Girls’ section attracts disproportionately more volunteers to lots of diverse roles (coaching, marketing, administration, events management, social and fundraising, compliance and welfare).



An all inclusive approach attracts new **sponsors and philanthropists** who are often unwilling to consider ‘men only’ clubs.

ECB funding and other grant aided or tax backed schemes are usually conditional on clubs having female playing membership.

Other Benefits



An open and inclusive policy sends a very positive message about the club's ethos; this helps to **attract new playing and non-playing members** to every tier in the club.



Women and Girls create an **excellent atmosphere at the club**. Social events gain a great new purpose and dynamic.

Financial Benefits

For most clubs, junior membership is profitable and the cost of introducing girls to the club (as opposed to more boys) is negligible.

New members mean new families and therefore new social and fundraising opportunities.



How to Build

First and foremost, you need to get backing from the club management and committee. **Everyone from Chairman to Groundsman must be 'bought in'** so that everyone is pulling in the same direction.

Don't expect to declare success in Year 1. Gather together some key members and parents, form a working group, and **write a 5 year plan**. To help you plan, think about where the club wants to be in year 5, and then work backwards.

Perhaps *the* most important thing above all else, is that you must **embed the women's and girls' sections as part of your club**. This means involving the girls in all aspects of club life and providing them with equal opportunities. It means equal access to coaching and facilities; it means making the girls an integral part of the club awards and presentation events; it means involving them in management and governance. This is key to success.



If you have an active junior boys' section, then you probably already have a girls section without knowing it! Forty five percent (45%) of Tunbridge Wells girls are sisters of current boy members. Our boys outnumber girls 2:1. Statistically, this means that a club with a 100 boys already has a **latent female playing membership of over 22**. You just need to reach out to them.

How to Build

Cricket is still considered to be a slightly esoteric option for girls, although this is becoming less of a barrier given the profile of the England Women's team.



Girls form closer friendship groups than boys and so you will have more success if you can persuade girls to join in pairs or as a group.



Sporty girls are often role models and revered at school by their peers.

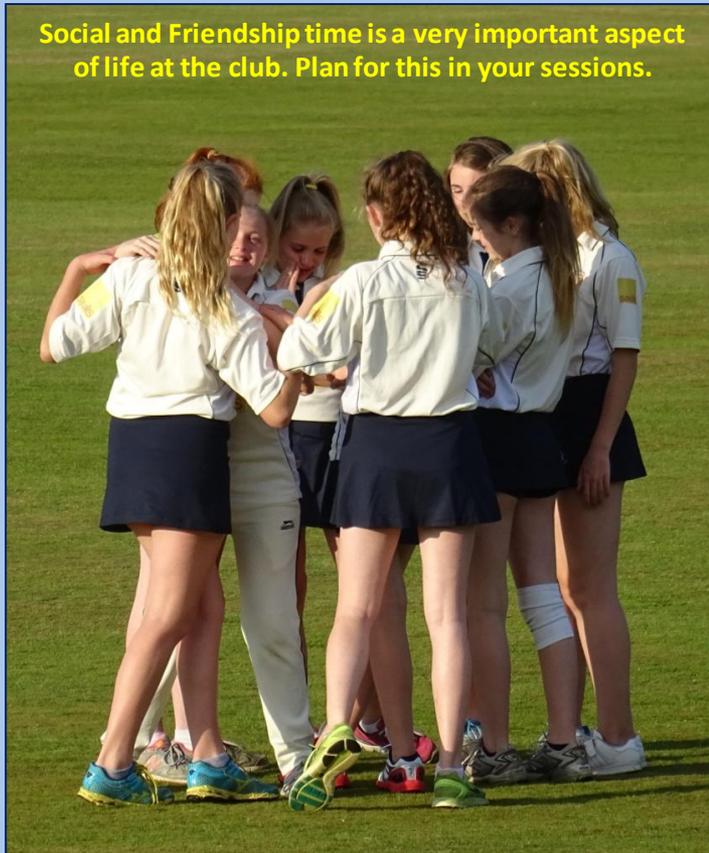
If you can attract these type of individuals to your club, it will often result in several others following from the same school. They make cricket cool.

How to Sustain

For girls, the social aspect of the club and game is far more important than it is for boys. Plan sessions that give girls the chance to have a chat and catch-up. It's not all about the cricket!



Social and Friendship time is a very important aspect of life at the club. Plan for this in your sessions.



If you are going to build your girls section relying on sisters and relatives, then you should run your training on the same night. This will make life easy for the parents and it will also make the girls feel part of the club.

Make sure girls have equal access to facilities and coaching. Treat them as second class and they will notice. You will fail.

Girls listen carefully to instructions and they like to put theory and learning into practice. It's important to spend time planning sessions and explaining what you will be doing.

In our 2014 survey, girls said they really value 1:1 coaching. Invest time in them and it will yield dividends.

More Ideas

Other things that have worked well for us include **training on Friday evenings**. Friday is a great day of the week; parents and kids are more chilled-out. There is less pressure to rush home on a 'school night'. The bar is busier and the atmosphere is excellent.

Involve the mums. Most are willing to help if asked. If you can get some mums to help with coaching, even better. Mums don't need to be cricketers to make a coaching difference. They need to be enthusiastic and have good communication and organisation skills. Mums relate to girls far better than men. Face it!



Make it fun, make it social, make it inclusive. Plan and deliver social events. It doesn't have to be expensive or lavish; but girls place a much higher value on the social aspect of the game, so you will attract and retain girls if you make it friendly and fun. Involve the whole family.

Build from the bottom-up. Attracting girls from age 12 up is difficult and rare. So get them engaged **age 7** upwards. Don't wait. In 5 years, you will supply half the Kent U13 squad!



Final Thoughts

Girls love competition. They are no different from boys in this respect. So if you develop a girls section, get them involved in matches and festivals. Most will be happy to play as part of a girls team in boys' festivals. Some girls are perfectly happy to play in boys' teams, but not all, so don't assume.

Develop your networks. You can't do it alone. Success won't happen over night, but it's worth it. There is plenty of good will and as we have proven, lots of demand. But it's hard work, so you must build an eco-system and share the work load. Think about involving young players as coaching assistants.



Did you know? Tunbridge Wells now have 20 girls registered to play men's Kent league cricket? Anna, our Australian import, was the 2015 men's 3rd XI leading wicket taker (with 50!) and she finished as the 2nd highest wicket taker in her league.

In the future

There is really no limit to what you can achieve. How far you decide to go will depend on your club's facilities, ambitions and resources.

But if you want to offer women's cricket, we strongly recommend that you make this part of your **long term plan**. To get there, you must build solid foundations and a year-on-year pipeline of players who feed through the system (U8, U11, U13, U15 and then Adult). By starting at the bottom, you are able to identify and attract coaching and administrative support who 'travel' with their daughters through the age groups.

County standard girls will play hardball at age 11. By 13, you need everyone playing hardball. Enter the U13 girls into local U11 boys' leagues. Games are short (typically 20:20). There is lots of opposition and very little travel. At U15, enter the girls into local U13 boys' leagues. If the local league does not agree – bang the table (politely, of course).



TWCC County representation:

3 @ U11
4 @ U13
4 @ U15
3 @ U17



Once they are past U15, it's **Adult cricket**. But if you have stuck to the plan, they will be ready for it!

Communication



As the girls get older, think about other forms of **social media**, like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Follow ECB guidelines (basically, put a responsible adult in charge!)

Ongoing communication is very important. Parents and supporters, but most importantly players, like to see a pathway. They will want to join a club that has a plan, has vision and some ambition. Keep thinking one season ahead.

A Newsletter is a simple and inexpensive way to engage. You don't have to write much – just fill it with photos. Once a month is plenty. E-mail it.

Wells Girls August & September 2015
Issue 5

The Newsletter for Tunbridge Wells Cricket Club Women & Girls
ONE WARWICK PARK

Welcome
Welcome to our August & September edition of **Wells Girls** ☺. It's the final one of the summer season ☺ and what a season we have had!

T20 Cricket
The 1st XI also play a series of 8 x T20 fixtures, with 2 games being played each Sunday in a triangular format. On 2nd August, we were due to

overs was frugal in the extreme. **Issy Altendorf** cleaned up the tail with 3-12 in two. But the vital wicket that swung the game belonged to **Rocky**, who finished on 1-6 in her 4 **overs**. Like **Lottie**, Kathy fell 1 run short of her half century and **Henfield** 14 short of the target. That's now 4 in 4 in the WCSL. Top work!



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