CHRISTCHURCH JUNIOR CRICKET ASSOCIATION

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20 May 2025

This report covers up until the 31st of July 2025

After two season of declining Saturday teams entries 2024/25 saw numbers rebound slightly with 200 teams starting the season and 181 teams at the end of the season

The Mini Mags Girls grade that was established in 2023/24 in order to provide a "Girls only" grade for those younger than the existing offerings in the Girls space grew from 5 to 7 teams and it hoped that this grade will continue to grow moving forward. In all the CJCA had 30 teams (15%) in its Girls only grades compared with just 15 teams nine seasons ago in 20215/16.

Of the 2117 junior players registered in PlayHQ in the season which includes players in pre-competition programmes, 403 were female, this percentage (19%) bodes well for future growth in teams going forward.



Clubs have continued to see the resources developed by New Zealand Cricket in the "Smash Play" programme as not only being an asset for the development of their pre-competition programmes but the GDO team were able to show how Smash Play games can be adapted to be a useful tool for skill development of older existing players.

A more extensive pre-season "Awareness Programme" was able to be delivered than in previous years with the GDO's assisted by casual deliverers that included amongst their ranks Emma McLeod who was to become a White Fern during the season. The added bodies on the ground were able to deliver a session with more variation than had been possible in past with up to or four stations of

games being set up for groups to rotate through with different skill focuses. Ideally promotion of the "Smash Play" resources to teachers that can be used without cricket deliverers would be an ideal situation as many teachers saw the games as fitting well into the curriculum and the "values pillar" approach reasonating positively with many.

The impact of the Game Development Officers in Christchurch cannot be underestimated in terms of the physical delivery capacity that it created pre-season and also the on the ground resource that meant that Volunteer Coaches were able to access support either in terms of club visits or direction to the on-line resources that are now easily accessible via the NZC Coaches Landing Page.

Lead initially by Rebeccas Gillett who departed late in 2024 and then by Dylan Smith the GDO team consisting of Kyle Stevens, Kenzie Pringle and Abigale Gerken performed admirably as they developed the concept that was adopted from the start of the 2023/24 season. Through assisting Clubs and also designing and delivering numerous activations, programme and festivals the teams aimed to expose the sport to as many participants as possible and convert curiosity into the next step of Club membership if not in 2024/25 but in seasons to come.

Assisting Rob Wilkinson with the Operational activities since 2020, Cat Quinn opted to step away from her assistants role early in the 2024/25 season – the arrival of the GDO team on the scene meant some of the tasks that Cat had been focused on were now sitting with the new team and overall workload had become more manageable for the General Manager. Cat continued to conduct the pre-season pitch audit and marking of schools artificials and produce outfield wickets for play on Council Parks. In addition to stepping away from the paid role she also left the CJCA Executive after a significant contribution as an Executive Member, acting Chair and Girls Convenor.

The CJCA Executive also continued to govern the Association with passion and were thanks to Rob Dixon who stepped into the role of Chair at the AGM in 2024 regularly ensure the Association was well govenred. Rob had previously been on the Board of Christchurch Metro and as the "Christchurch Project" which continues to slowly move towards a probable merger between the CJCA and Christchurch Metro looks to gain more momentum and the changes to Incorporated Societies Act means such a merger or creation of a new "Christchurch Cricket" entity could occur at the same time he is well placed to navigate this significant piece of work with assistance from the Executive.

The CJCA Executive also farewelled Tim McClurg and Theresa Buller during the season but welcomed Dwayne McCormick as the new Year 6 Convenor to join Francis van Woerkom, Matt Shore, Gemma Dixon, Abhi Shrikande, Callum Green, Nadine Archibald, Rebecca Brocherie and Graham Brown.

The Executive constantly seeks to ensure that the CJCA delivers what its member Clubs and Schools require to maintain and ideally grow it membership through challenging our current offerings and thinking of new ways that we can operate for the betterment of the sport in Christchurch and further afield.

Saturday Cricket

Not the hottest or driest of Summers in Christchurch led to us losing two Saturdays of play – one either side of Christmas but all in all there was plenty of action happening all around Christchurch and further afield as we continued work with Girls Clubs from Selwyn and Rangiora given the current stage of the Girls game in terms of teams.

There were few instances of poor behaviour compared with 2023/24 and the CJCA thanks Clubs and Schools for putting the emphasis on those managing games to focus on the needs of the participant first and foremost.

Grounds continue to be a challenge especially with the growing conditions which persisted far beyond the conventional windows of "Spring" – the CJCA spent over $2000 on additional mowing of certain key School grounds and were thankful that during the season a number of new Council built and funded artificial pitches came on-line. The replacing of aging and difficult to prepare grass wickets with artificials effectively doubled the number of participants that are able to use a venue not only on a Saturday but also for ad-hoc matches or more unstructured play. New artificials at Nunweek Park, two at Spreydon Domain, and Knights Stream Park as well as replacement of old surfaces at a number of high traffic grounds all aimed to improve the overall experience for more cricketers in Christchurch. We thank John Furlong at the Christchurch City Council in addition to the grounds staff at Hagley Oval who allowed the use of Hagley Oval on 6 occasions which allowed for every team in our youngest three grades, Kiwi, year 3 and Year4 to have at least one "Hagley Oval Experience"

PlayHQ continued to improve throughout the year but still few instances of games dropping out and e-scoring sessions being lost still prove to be a frustration.

The Registration and Club Management platform improved significantly with the majority of clubs now utilising the payment functionality for collection subs and the customisation of reports allowing clubs to set up reports they regularly require without the sometimes large amount of data not really required for the day to day management of Club or School. The integration of XERO with the system also proved beneficial for clubs who use that accounting software.

The CJCA continues to press for better access to a CRM communication tool and it hoped that some positive news will shortly be forthcoming on that front.

Though still quite cumbersome the match management and draw functionality within PlayHQ still requires significant time and concentration to ensure that the public facing draws make sense and can be found and ground allocations are fair in terms of the travel for teams across the city.

The CJCA continues to develop its grades constantly aiming to create a balance between challenge and success by regrading at a number of times during the season. No one likes to be badly beaten regularly and winning easily isn't ideal on a regular basis so we thank Clubs, Schools and Individual teams for buying in to what we are trying to achieve by this approach to grade management.

Extension Opportunities

Our Pre-season Programme and Festival Programme continued to give those wishing to develop more than via Saturday Cricket opportunities to do.

Our Boys Pre-season Programme was delivered by a group of skilled coaches using best practice methodologies to develop players over 6 weeks leading into the season. Our Spring and Summer Festival gave Year 6, 7 and 8 Boys an opportunity to play games as part of teams mixed up from all over the city and this "melting pot" of players provided not only cricketing challenge benefits but also assisting in developing all important social and team skills that will benefit those who were involved in both a cricketing sense and the life-skills sense.

Our Girls extension opportunities revolved around a holiday pre-season programme, two Sundays in Spring at which players were able to play on grass pitches which prepared them for action in the Christchurch Girls Festivals which we again hosted at Burnside Park in mid-January. Ten Girls teams took part with the Festival welcoming back Dunedin and Southland after a two year break and 2026 promises to be even bigger with a slight date change to avoid a clash with a large Athletics event hopefully attracting more teams.

The January Boys Festival were all held outside Christchurch with slightly lower than normal registrations for CJCA teams. In all 10 CJCA teams represented the Association with teams participating in Festivals in Blenheim, Westport, Ashburton and North Canterbury (Mandeville). We thank all the coaches, managers and scorers who assisted these teams in playing multi day Festival against other District Association teams. January 2026 sees the Association host the Tier 2 January Festival for Year 7/8 cricketers in addition to the Girls Festival the following week.

Finances and Funding

The CJCA continues to be in a strong position and in 2024/25 should deliver its programme within budget not needing to draw on its reserves as it seeks to build a sustainable funding model based on its activities and due to the changing nature of external funding sources and across the board cost increases.

The adoption of a more realistic Player Levy for Saturday players reflective of the amount of work that goes into that core component of the CJCA activities has been a major reason why the Association is in this position and has already tagged any surplus into potential legal costs that may be associated with the new Constitution required by the new Incorporated Societies Act which will need to come in at the conclusion of the 2025/26 playing season if the Association wishes to apply for Class 4 gaming funding. The Association is also considering the viability and sustainability of a "Hardship Fund" that individuals may access to assist where costs such as club subs, programme or event fees may be a challenge for some families.

The Association wishes to acknowledge all its funding partners including Christchurch Metro Cricket, Canterbury Cricket and New Zealand Cricket, New Zealand Community Trust, Air Rescue Trust and the Kiwi Gaming Foundation. We also greatly value the sponsorship of Cricket Express and Kookaburra as these all contribute to trying to keep our participation costs as low as possible.

Rob Wilkinson

General Manager