CHRISTCHURCH JUNIOR CRICKET ASSOCIATION

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15 July 2026

This report covers up until the 31st of July 2026

After a recovery in 2024/25 the following season saw an additional 12 teams start the fresh season in October 2025 and additional teams joining after Christmas meant we finished the 2025/26 season with 200 teams.

Pleasingly we continued to grow in the Girls space with the Mini Mags grade for younger girls growing to 8 teams eliminating the Bye for the first time in that grades 3 year history and 24 teams in Girls Division 3 and 4. The flow through to Metro Youth Women's grades is excellent with now 10 teams in Division 2 grade, the next step for Girls once they leave CJCA grades. This improving depth and numbers above that point means that players have a pathway from an early age through competitions with meaningful teams numbers creating vibrant competitions and development opportunities.

Due to staff turnover a significant amount of "Awareness Programme" delivery was done by Clubs with a fresh GDO team of Daniel McKenzie and Ella Scarlet and a number of casual GDO deliverers managing to get into a congested school calendar in term 3 at a number of core schools. It is important to note that a 1000 of our participants (approximately half) attend just 20 of the largest schools with cricketers and it is vital that we have a presence in these schools pre-season when decisions about Summer Sports choices are made especially in the Years 1-3 was we have a good retention rate once participants join our sport.

The Game Development Officers in Christchurch delivered a number of programmes including Girls Smash and Smash Play hubs in identified low engagement communities in addition to All Abilities Cricket which is an inclusive cricket programme for young people with a Physical, Intellectual or Visual disabilities. The All-Abilities hub aims to break down barriers to participation in traditional cricket, which is often viewed as a technical sport, by providing a free, have a go programme at an accessible facility. The GDO team were effectively assisted by Kelly Bodger who arrived as the Women and Girls lead but quickly came into the role of Community Cricket Manager when Simon Hill was seconded to New Zealand Cricket, Kellys fresh enthusiasm and the support work of Abigale Gerken in the Women and Girls space was appreciated through the season.

The GDO team also worked to support coaches in the Junior game and were assisted to develop their capacity in this area by Shaun Stagg who joined the Christchurch Metro staff during 2025 but does a significant amount of work in the Coach Development area. This builds initial confidence and Skills in Coaching in CJCA cricket in the first instance. Supporting new coaches and giving them skills and support is vital to build the capacity to support growth. The growing number of on-line resources created by New Zealand Cricket and easily accessible via the internet will hopefully give coaches ideas about how to keep their sessions fresh and engaging for their teams.

The CJCA Executive also continued to govern the Association with passion and we thank to Rob Dixon who continues in his role of Chair.

The biggest governance issue to deal with in 2025/26 was the adoption of a new Constitution to come into line with the new Incorporated Societies Act. This was passed at a Special General Meeting in March of 2026 and the incoming Board at the next AGM will operate under that new Constitution. The main change in terms of voting rights is the removal of these rights from Officers and previously elected Life and Honorary Members. Members will consist of Member Clubs (who must be registered under the new Act) in addition to Schools who participate in our competitions.

It is hoped more progress can be made now with both the CJCA and Metro Cricket having similar Constitutions meaning a probable merger between the CJCA and Christchurch Metro looks to gain more momentum.

The CJCA Executive also farewelled Matt Shore and the smaller Executive to be elected at the AGM of 2026 will mean Year Convenors who have generally been appointed to Executive will now form more of an Operational Group assisting the delivery of the CJCA's activities but also providing a sounding board for the smaller Executive in terms of how the junior game develops going forward in Christchurch.

The Executive constantly seeks to ensure that the CJCA delivers what its member Clubs and Schools require to maintain and ideally grow its 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

A rather dull and damp Summer in Christchurch still provided playable weather on every scheduled playing day of the season meaning 16 days of Cricket were provided to our participants.

The amount of rain that fell was three times the norm from the start of December to the end of February meaning that the CJCA still had to provide additional mowing of some grounds well into the New Year. It is hoped that a forecast change of weather pattern may lessen this demand for budget overspend past the end of November which is when grass ceases to grow at a great rate.

There were few instances of poor behaviour compared with previous years with inconsistent interpretation of the Playing Conditions causing situations that didn't need to arise 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" – a new artificial at Tullet 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. A number of Schools are undertaking rebuilds of their fields and this will mean over the next 12-18 months that a number of larger school grounds will come back online. These include Russley School (temporary building due to a rebuild after fire now gone), Christchurch South Intermediate (improved drainage) and Cobham Intermediate (full field remediation after rebuild), possible remediation assistance to Banks Ave School, continued assistance to Shirley Intermediate and improved access to Heaton Intermediate.

The CJCA is also replacing the Artificial at Northcote School which adjoins Marist Harewood base at Redwood Park and installing a gate between the School and Redwood Park to assist in toilet access at the Marist Harewood Clubrooms.

The CJCA also worked with OBC to create a 'Hub" for Outfield Cricket at Walter Park which could operate alongside a game on the Artificial pitch. This gave OBC teams in Kiwi, Year 3 & 4 and Mini Mags a venue closer to their base and these pitches were maintained by the OBC.

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 four grades, Kiwi, Year 3 & Year 4 and Mini Mags to have at least one "Hagley Oval Experience". At the time of writing we are hopefully that additional Artificial pitches on Council Parks especially in growth areas or areas that are currently short of access to close full sized grounds will shortly be confirmed by the Council.

The late announcement of the proposed Technology Levy that would have created an initial payment barrier for anyone registering for a Cricket Club caused some pre-season angst but due to the overwhelming position of those at grassroots level this was delayed until further notice.

The "Cricket Central" App that was released during the season had some good features and had a solid uptake but its functionality again, as PlayHQ was in its early years, still had some teething issues and significant developments to make it a more useful tool.

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.

Feedback was received after the 2025/26 season and a number of changes related to Retirements, Grace Period bowling bonuses and game length in the Year 7 & 8 mornings grades are likely to be introduced in the upcoming season. Reinforcement of current Playing Conditions that were varied at the whim of Coaches or Managers are to be made as these often create confusion and possible conflicts.

Extension Opportunities

Our Pre-season Programme and Festival Programme continued to give those wishing to develop more than via Saturday Cricket opportunities 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 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 to prepare them for action in the Christchurch Girls Festivals which we again hosted at Burnside Park and Elmwood Park in mid-January. A record 14 Girls teams took part with the Festival welcoming West Coast for the first time ever and 2027 promises to be even bigger with previously involved teams from Otago Country and Nelson likely to return. Again the dates will avoid a clash with a large Athletics event to be held later in the week which will hopefully attract more teams.

The Girls Festival unfortunately effected by isolated downpours on the final day with all but 1 day abandoned either before play commenced or after just a few overs. The Christchurch teams were able to have a "Make-up" day where our 4 teams played each other in two 20/20 and there were only a couple of girls who weren't available to play. It was great to be able utilised grounds at Redwood Park prepared by Marist-Harewood. Plans for the 2026/27 season include interdistricts games in late November between CJCA and neighbouring district teams.

The January Boys Festival were held in Timaru, Christchurch and Country with 4 more CJCA teams than in 2025. In all 14 CJCA teams represented the Association with teams the CJCA Black team at the Tier 1 Festival going unbeaten in their Festival the first CJCA team to do this since the new Tiered structure which replaced the South Island Festival. We thank all the coaches, managers and scorers who assisted these teams in playing multi day Festival against other District Association teams. January 2027 sees the Association host the Tier 3 January Festival for Year 7/8 cricketers in addition to the Girls Festival the following week.

School Cricket

The CJCA facilitates two day festivals for Year 7 & 8 Boys and Girls Schools and in the Girls Festival we recognised the lack of schools with enough numbers at schools to make a full team of current cricketers or confident non-cricketers to play Hardball. In November 2025 we invited all Girls in Year 7/8 who were not included in School teams to register for "Combined Schools" teams which we co-ordinated coaches for. We charged each player a nominal fee ($30) to pay the Coaches and this swelled the number of teams in the event to 10 compared with 4 or 5 in recent years. We also accepted entries from teams from Canterbury Country (two) and a team that travelled from Marlborough which gave them an excellent lead into the January Girls Festival in which Marlborough had entered two teams.

Finances and Funding

The CJCA continues to be in a strong position and in 2025/26 delivered 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. Its 2025/26 result will allow the holding of the current Player Levy at $30 per player for 2026/27.

The Association made a “Hardship Fund” available that individuals may access to assist where costs such as club subs, programme or event fees may be a challenge for some families. This will be continued in 2026/27.

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

Rob Wilkinson

General Manager