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# AUCKLAND CRICKET ASSOCIATION INC.

## CRICKET EXPRESS JUNIOR LEAGUES Philosophy & Guiding Principles

This document sets out Auckland Cricket's philosophical approach and guiding principles to the junior cricket competitions we administer (i.e. the Cricket Express Junior Leagues).

### Philosophy

First and foremost we aim to provide competitions that meet the needs of the most important participants – the players. All major research undertaken on kids sport highlights that the NUMBER ONE reason for participation is FUN.

Kids will have fun provided that the sport:

- Offers plenty of opportunities for everyone to have a go
- Has rules that are appropriate to skill levels and age group
- Encourages fairplay and teamwork
- Is inclusive and embraces different skill levels and abilities, supporting the development and improvement of ALL players

Auckland Cricket also takes a long term view of athlete development. This view recognizes that:

- Kids develop and mature at different rates
- Perceived ability or skill level at a young age is not an indicator of future talent and potential
- Early sporting experiences should involve variety, experimentation and plenty of opportunities – not specialization, over coaching and early talent identification

### Guiding Principles

- ✓ Based on the above points, the rules of the various junior grades have been established to ensure that all players have opportunities to participate in batting and bowling and that the full rules and length of the game are gradually introduced as players get older.
- ✓ We would also like to see all clubs adopt an approach when selecting teams that is inclusive and takes a longer term view of player development. All kids develop and mature at different rates and we must all be very aware that the skill level and ability of players at a junior level is not necessarily indicative of their future potential. For this reason it is important that we give all players the opportunity to develop and not

exclude young players from opportunities based on current perceived ability.

- ✓ We acknowledge that within the various year groups there are tiered grades (e.g. 6B, 6A, 6 Prem) and that clubs will select teams that will successfully compete at each of these levels. However, we would encourage a flexible approach that year on year (and even within seasons) players may be able to move between grades to experience appropriate challenges. Furthermore, we would encourage clubs that have multiple teams within a grade (e.g. two Year 7 Premier teams) to balance the selection of these teams and ensure they are of similar strength rather than creating perceived 'A' and 'B' teams.
- ✓ Grades below Year 6 are all administered by clubs and/or districts. We strongly encourage these age groups to not have tiered grades and that teams involve players of all abilities. It may mean that within games coaches need to ensure that challenges are appropriate (e.g. better bowlers bowling to better batsmen), but all players should be given opportunities to learn and develop amongst their peers.
- ✓ Finally, we recognize that a game of cricket is a competition and that all teams should be striving to win. Winning is also fun! However, winning is the outcome of all players doing their best and combining well as a team. As such, we encourage coaches to focus on the process – i.e. players giving 100% and working well together, and let the outcome take care of itself. The satisfaction of a team effort producing a win provides players of all abilities with confidence, and often this is all that is required to give players with 'lesser' perceived abilities the necessary boost to further develop their game.