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PLAYER RECRUITMENT and RETENTION

BACKGROUND

“It is at the junior level that the future players and fans of sport are to be found, with officials realising that without a strong player base there will be no champions coming through to the top over which to fight. Children are now seen as the greatest commodity and sports administrators are realising they can no longer be complacent and rely on family association for recruitment and development.”

[Fiona Purdon, ‘A Battle for Sporting Supremacy is Being Fought Out Across the Schoolyards of Queensland’, Brisbane Courier-Mail, April 17, 2000]

‘Traditionally, new club members have been the sons and daughters, or brothers and sisters of existing club members. This is not a guaranteed source of new junior cricketers and other sources should be explored.’

[Yorkshire Cricket Board]

“Cricket clubs need to recognise the work that goes on in sport in schools, and not just wait for children to leave school and expect them to come and join up. There are so many activities for young people these days, cricket can’t sit back and say “They will come to us”, you’ve got to go out and get them.”

[Kate Hoey, UK Minister for Sport in ‘The Cricketer’, October 2000, p17]

Attracting, developing and keeping players are key to the ongoing health and wellbeing of cricket clubs and to the game within primary and secondary schools. At the junior/primary school level of the game creating an awareness and/or interest in the game as a prelude to recruiting players is critical. It is essential that the first experience that youngsters have is a well organised one with the emphasis being on fun and skill development if they are to compete in the game and enjoy their involvement. So the focus at this level of the game is one of **RECOGNITION** and **RECRUITMENT** with the object of the current MILO and conventional cricket programmes being to ensure their **RETENTION**. A strong commitment of parents and teachers as coaches, administrators and supporters is essential to this process.

At the secondary school/youth and the adult/club levels the emphasis is very much on player **RETENTION**. How do we keep players in the game? This is where cricket clubs and secondary schools need to be fully aware of the influences impacting on players and as such there is a need to ensure that

INFRASTRUCTURES are in place to support and service their interests, abilities and needs. Organised practices, quality coaching, appropriate competitions with modified formats catering for both the competitive and the recreational player, and flexible scheduling all need careful consideration in the retention of today's players. Failure to recognise change and adapt to prevailing demands is not a recipe for sustainability. It should be noted that currently 44% of all adults participating in the game are playing in modified action forms of the game [eg. midweek twilight, action or corporate, modified cricket competitions such as Super 8s, Twenty20 or variants of these].

The aim of this **SCHOOL SUPPORT** and **CLUB ASSIST** resource is to provide school and club administrators with a set of guidelines about **RECRUITING** and **RETAINING** players. While there are numerous suggestions to achieve these objectives, there is no substitute within a club or school for effective organisation, a clear player pathway serviced by quality coaches and coaching, and access to sound practice and playing facilities and equipment. There are no short cuts. Strong links need to be built with contributing community schools and new players need to be made welcome and catered for. This takes time, effort and a large dose of volunteer enthusiasm.

WHY DO PEOPLE PLAY CRICKET?

To be able to **RECRUIT** new players to the game and therefore new members to your cricket club; and **RETAIN** existing members it is important to understand the **REASONS** why people play cricket. Research identifies the main reasons for people playing cricket include:

- **Making new friends**
- **Building self-confidence**
- **Enjoying the feeling of belonging to a team**
- **Having fun and enjoying themselves**
- **Having a passion for cricket**
- **The rewards and recognition**
- **The competitive challenge**

The reasons why males and females play is also a recruitment and retention consideration for schools and cricket clubs as they have a different order of priority, although for both their major reason is to have fun and enjoy themselves.

REASONS FOR PLAYING CRICKET

MAIN REASONS WHY MALES PLAY CRICKET [in rank order]	MAIN REASONS WHY FEMALES PLAY CRICKET [in rank order]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have fun 2. To do something they are good at 3. To learn new skills 4. To be physically fit 5. To improve their skills 6. To compete 7. The challenge 8. To be in a team 9. The excitement 10. The action <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"><i>‘Males tend to be more orientated towards skill development and competition’</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have fun 2. The team spirit 3. To be in a team 4. The teamwork 5. To be physically fit 6. To learn new skills 7. To improve their skills 8. To get exercise 9. The action 10. The excitement <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"><i>‘Females tend to be more focused on their involvement with the team and on skill development’</i></p>

Adapted from Cadeyrn Gaskin, 2000, Occupying the Crease: The Influence of Parents and Coaches on New Zealand Adolescent Participation in Cricket, Master in Business Studies in Management thesis, Massey University, p128

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The main focus of the New Zealand Cricket **NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME** is ‘about getting individuals to play and stay in the game’. The programme has two key **OBJECTIVES**:

1. *The first objective is ‘GAME’ focused and is to INCREASE THE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION in the game [QUANTITY ie. players and volunteer supporters – coaches, umpires, scorers, administrators]*
2. *The second objective is ‘PLAYER/PARTICIPANT’ focused and is to SUSTAIN THESE LEVELS through BETTER SERVICING THE PLAYERS/PARTICIPANTS so that they stay in the game [QUALITY ie. club and school structures and organisation, competitions, coaching, skill development, improved facilities, talent identification, volunteer education and recognition]*

To this end New Zealand Cricket has invested in the establishment of a network of **CRICKET DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS** [Community Cricket Coordinators, Club Managers, MILO Summer Squad] to deliver a wide range of **INITIATIVES** to attract, develop and keep players in the game. These are aimed at addressing the five key **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES** – **RECOGNITION, RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, RESTRUCTURING** and **RESOURCING** – each of which is intended to **GROW** and **SUSTAIN** the game within primary schools, secondary schools and cricket clubs [see diagram: ‘Development Levels and Strategies’].

In addition, to these New Zealand Cricket strategies, all of which are available through the Cricket Development Officers in each cricket association, schools and clubs should also be looking to increase their player numbers through active **RECRUITMENT**. The following are some **RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES** that schools and clubs can use to increase **PLAYER REGISTRATIONS** and elevate the **PROFILE** of cricket within their local communities.

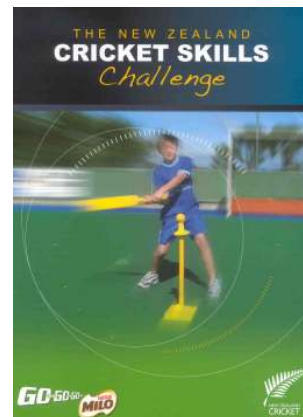
PRIMARY/JUNIOR LEVEL

1. MILO INITIATIVES

Arrange through your local cricket association for the **MILO SUMMER SQUAD** to visit your primary school, or as a cricket club to visit nominated primary schools within your community. At each school the MILO Summer Squad will run **MILO CRICKET SKILLS AWARENESS LESSONS** [Years 1-6] and/or the **NEW ZEALAND CRICKET SKILLS CHALLENGE** [Years 7-8] to provide children with a fun ‘taste’ of the game along with information about how to register to play cricket either for their school or the local cricket club

NEW ZEALAND CRICKET SKILLS CHALLENGE

The New Zealand Cricket Skills Challenge is a structured series of lessons which allows Year 7 and 8 students to test themselves in a number of fundamental cricket skill areas against a set of easily measurable standards and achieve a bronze, silver or gold skill award in recognition of their level of performance. The Challenge is an effective, fun way to promote cricket in schools.



DEVELOPMENT LEVELS and STRATEGIES

LEVELS STRATEGIES	PRIMARY [MILO INITIATIVES]	SECONDARY [SCHOOL SUPPORT]	CLUB [CLUB ASSIST]
RECOGNITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication by MILO Summer Squad with schools – flyers, packs, manuals, CD-Roms, partnership agreements <input type="checkbox"/> MILO cricket skills awareness lessons and holiday clinics <input type="checkbox"/> NZ Cricket Skills Challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication by MILO Summer Squad and Community Cricket Coordinators with schools – partnership agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication by MILO Summer Squad and Community Cricket Coordinators with clubs - partnership agreements <input type="checkbox"/> MILO holiday clinics
RECRUITMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Have-A-Go Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Kiwi Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> Quikhit <input type="checkbox"/> Backyard Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Cup and MILO Shield national primary school competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New shorter version, flexible, game formats eg. Slog Sixes, Super 8s, Twenty20, Quikhit <input type="checkbox"/> Backyard Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> Gillette Cup and New Zealand Community Trust Cup national secondary school senior girls' and junior boys' competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Have-A-Go Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Kiwi Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> Backyard Cricket <input type="checkbox"/> New shorter version, flexible, game formats eg, Super 8s, Twenty20, Quikhit <input type="checkbox"/> National club competition
RETENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Have-A-Go Cricket Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Kiwi Cricket Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Getting Started in Coaching a Cricket Team Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Player databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Getting Started in Coaching a Cricket Team Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 and 2 Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket Leadership Course <input type="checkbox"/> School Support initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Player databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Have-A-Go Cricket Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Kiwi Cricket Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Getting Started in Coaching a Cricket Team Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 and 2 Coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Club Assist initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Player databases
RESTRUCTURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Player pathway – modified cricket options eg. Quikhit, Slog Sixes <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Have-A-Go Cricket programme <input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand Cricket Skills Challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Player pathway – modified cricket options eg. Quikhit, Slog Sixes <input type="checkbox"/> Year 9/10 fixtures and regional competitions <input type="checkbox"/> Senior interschool fixtures and regional competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Player pathway – modified [eg. Quikhit] and flexible [eg. Village Cricket] cricket options <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Have-A-Go Cricket programme <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Kiwi Cricket programme
RESOURCING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Summer Squad <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional giveaways <input type="checkbox"/> MILO information and administration booklets <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching manuals <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching videos/DVDs <input type="checkbox"/> Educational CD-Roms <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial pitch funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community Cricket Coordinators <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching manuals <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial pitch funding <input type="checkbox"/> School support advice and guidance resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Check • Strategic Planning • School Clubs • Local Game Coordinators • Running a Cricket Club • Financial Management • Coaches and Coaching • Coach Education • Practice Plans • Funding Schemes • Turf Pitch Management • Artificial Pitches and Practice Nets • Modified Game Formats • Game Understanding • Player Recruitment and Retention • Volunteers • School-Club Links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community Cricket Coordinators <input type="checkbox"/> MILO Summer Squad <input type="checkbox"/> MILO information and administration booklets <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching manuals <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching videos/DVDs <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial pitch funding <input type="checkbox"/> Club Assist advice and guidance resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Check • Strategic Planning • School Clubs • Local Game Coordinators • Running a Cricket Club • Financial Management • Coaches and Coaching • Coach Education • Practice Plans • Funding Schemes • Turf Pitch Management • Artificial Pitches and Practice Nets • Modified Game Formats • Twenty20 • Game Understanding • Player Recruitment and Retention • Volunteers • Club-School Links

2. ADVERTISING

Your school or cricket club is just one of many competing for youngsters' time. What makes school cricket or your cricket club special or attractive for youngsters? Promote the positive aspects that school cricket or belonging to your junior cricket club offers young players.

In order to recruit players effectively, schools and cricket clubs need to emphasise the opportunities that playing cricket provides for social contact, for a sense of personal satisfaction through their development, meeting challenges and enjoyment.

Basic forms of advertising within the local community will help you spread the word about the game and how youngsters can get involved. You may like to consider advertising in some or all of the following:

- **Local newspapers or radio**
- **Local noticeboards [eg. schools, libraries, leisure centres]**
- **Local shop windows [eg. supermarkets, corner diaries]**
- **Local cricket association newsletters and/or handbooks**
- **School newsletters**
- **Posters**
- **Cricket club flyers or information sheets which can be handed out at school class or assembly visits, or distributed in letter boxes within the club's local community**
- **School, cricket club or cricket association websites**

ATTRactions OF PLAYING CRICKET AT SCHOOL OR FOR A CLUB

- **New friendships**
- **New skills**
- **Sense of belonging**
- **Rewards of involvement**
- **Exciting opportunities**
- **Competition**
- **Social occasions**
- **Quality coaching**
- **Organised practices**
- **Exciting matches**
- **Effective organisation**

The Cricket Season is just around the corner, and

Junior Cricket Registrations

are being taken by Clubs NOW !

Junior Cricket is provided for all children attending Primary or Intermediate Schools. Several Boys only, Girls only, or Mixed team grades exist catering from Milo Have-a-Go to Senior Traditional. The following Clubs all cater for Boys and Girls who wish to play cricket in Saturday morning cricket competitions during the summer.

Club Name	Contact	Phone	Registration days/times	Venue
Burnside West	Tony Scott	359 5741	10 Sept 10am-12pm	Burnside Park
East Shirley	Dave Tait	942 8822	22/23 Sept 5-7pm, 24 Sept 9-12pm	Burwood Park
Halswell	Bruce Day	322 7016		
Hartwood	Paul Case	352 0489	17 Sept 10-12pm	Redwood Park
Heathcote	Ian Carlwright	384-1922		
Hornby	Paul Morris	344-0445	11/18/25 Sept 11am-1pm	Denton Park
Lancaster Park Woolston	Karen Verbeek	980 5747	18 Sept 11am-12pm	Garrick Park
Marist	Greg Curtain	348 9953 Ex1817	17 Sept 10-12pm	Middleton Park
Merivale Papanui	Paul Thomas	387 0557	10/17 Sept 10am-12pm	Edgar McIntosh Park
New Brighton	Brent Davidson	960 0582	16 Sept 4.30-6pm, 18 Sept 10.30am-1pm	Rawhill Domain
Old Boys Collegians	Richard Falloon	358-4665	10/17 Sept 8am-12pm	Cricket Express, St Asaph St
Parklands	Gary Thomson	03 310 7664	10/11 Sept, 12pm-2pm	Parklands Community Centre
St Albans (Girls Only)	Chris O'Brien-Smith	942 4501	10/17 Sept 10am-12pm	Hagley Oval Pavilion
Summer	Ross Gunn	326 7213	10/11/17/18 Sept 10-12pm	St Leonards Square
Sydenham	Garry Gardner	332 4386		
Upper Riccarton	Tim McCardle	942 6747	17 Sept 10-12pm	Riccarton Domain

Join a Club now and play in the organised and structured C.J.C.A. Junior Cricket competitions. Opportunities exist for children to aspire to Canterbury Representative honours or just play for fun, enjoyment, friendship, participation, social inter-action, skill development and being part of a team in New Zealand's leading summer sport.

Don't forget that one of the strongest and most effective forms of local advertising is by personal recommendation – WORD OF MOUTH

3. CLUB-LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL LINKS

Traditionally, new junior members have been the son's and daughters of existing club members or cricketers. Today this is not a guaranteed source of new juniors and other sources should be explored. One of the best ways to ensure a steady stream of new juniors is via local community **PRIMARY SCHOOLS**.

Many primary schools have MILO Kiwi Cricket gear which means their children have the chance to play cricket and they may now be looking for somewhere to play it out of school ... your cricket club for example! Additionally, there will be many children in schools where cricket is not played, who would welcome the opportunity to be introduced to the game.

By liaising with your local cricket association your cricket club can arrange for their **MILO SUMMER SQUAD** to visit select local schools within your catchment area. As part of their structured programme they will hand out information [ie. pamphlets, flyers, posters] about where your club is and how to become a member. Ideally, a club member may like to assist with this process and in doing so be able to reinforce the benefits of joining your cricket club.

In addition, cricket clubs can also try some of the following:

- **Posters**
Advertise your junior section by asking for posters to be displayed on school notice boards.
- **Assemblies**
Many schools would welcome a confident player or club official to talk about cricket and joining your cricket club in their assemblies.
- **Coaching**
You may have a qualified coach or coaches who you could offer to help school staff deliver cricket to their students. This could be either at the school or at the club.
- **Festivals**
Invite a number of local schools to play in a modified cricket or skills festival on your cricket club ground. Maybe have a sausage sizzle. Use the festival as a way to promote your club's MILO Have-A-Go Cricket, MILO Kiwi Cricket or hardball cricket programmes.

4. WINTER CODES

Establish an agreement with a winter sport[s] to allow the exchange of mailing lists and advertise in each other's newsletters at appropriate times in the season is also a great way of increasing registrations. It is quite common for children who play a winter sport together to try and find a summer sport they can play together as well.

5. CLUB DATABASES

The establishment of a detailed cricket club **DATABASE** allows clubs to keep an accurate track of their members. Make sure that the database is used prior to the start of each season to send out **INVITATION LETTERS** or **EMAILS** informing existing players of upcoming club events and welcoming them to register again for the upcoming season. If your club has the computer capability such registrations can be done online.

Once registrations are received follow-up any past players who have not registered, either with a personal visit or by telephone to ascertain if they intend playing again this season.

*The health and wellbeing of cricket within schools and clubs is dependent upon them creating and maintaining an accurate record or **DATABASE** of members*

SECONDARY/YOUTH LEVEL

1. ASSOCIATION YEAR 8 DATABASES

A number of cricket associations now collect data about their Year 8 junior cricketers and are able to provide secondary schools with a list of prospective cricketers and any of their parents keen to be involved in coaching and/or managing teams. This is aimed at improving the transition for players between primary/intermediate school and secondary school. Secondary schools need to contact their local cricket association to see if they have such a database of new entrants who play cricket.

2. MODIFIED CRICKET OPTIONS

About 22% of secondary school cricketers play some form of modified cricket. Many do so because they want to play a midweek, shorter version game with no commitment to practise. Schools and clubs should consider offering Twenty20 or Super8s to attract youth recreational cricketers.

Two further modified versions of the game, designed by New Zealand Cricket to encourage greater participation, include **QUIKHIT** and **SLOG SIXES**:

- **QUIKHIT** - is an 8 a-side, girls' only, 12 over modified cricket game. It uses special, coloured, lightweight team equipment, which can be purchased from New Zealand Cricket, and has been devised for 11-15 year old girls to act as a transition between MILO Kiwi Cricket and hardball cricket.
- **SLOG SIXES** - is 6 a-side version of the game which can be used in physical education classes, or as a lunchtime competition. It is an action-packed game that can be played on any reasonably flat

surface, in a limited time frame [30-60 minutes], with a minimum of equipment and only needs 6 players of any ability or skill level to make up a team.

3. CRICKET LEADERSHIP COURSE

This is another New Zealand Cricket initiative, and is run in secondary schools by the Community Cricket Coordinators with Year 12 Physical Education students who can gain 3 NCEA credits if they successfully complete the achievement standard 2.7, or with Year 13 students doing a sports management course, or a sports option/elective. This can be used to involve club coaching



CCC and senior secondary school students as part of the 'Cricket Leadership Course' running coaching sessions in a local community primary school

personnel and/or introduce a high profile club player to the students as part of the course and to build strong links with a local secondary school. This course is aimed at increasing the profile of the game with senior students and providing them with the skills to make a contribution as a coach and/or umpire assisting organise cricket within their school or local community primary/intermediate schools.

4. CLUB –SECONDARY SCHOOL LINKS – ‘CLUBS IN SCHOOLS’

There are numerous opportunities for **CRICKET CLUBS** as the ‘hub’ of cricket within a community to involve themselves with local secondary schools to assist with the development of the game and its players, and ensure that these young cricketers have a viable outlet to play the game when they leave school. Good club-school links can provide young people with positive experiences and ease their transition from school to club cricket. Successful club-school links have major benefits for both groups, but are an especially important **RECRUITMENT STRATEGY** for cricket clubs in terms of sustaining and strengthening their membership base [See the ‘School Support’ and ‘Club Assist’ resource ‘**Effective Club-School and School-Club Links**’ on how to build strong club-school linkages].

5. EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION and MANAGEMENT

There is no substitute for cricket as a sport in a secondary school being **WELL ORGANISED, EFFECTIVELY PLANNED** and **EFFICIENTLY MANAGED**. In most secondary schools responsibility for this lies with the **DIRECTOR** or **TEACHER-IN-CHARGE OF CRICKET**.

If cricket is well run and administered within a secondary school, then students, teachers and parents will want to be involved. This creates a sporting environment in which they know what is happening and why, and

what is expected of them and why. The availability of **QUALITY COACHES** who receive strong support and recognition is also a major drawcard as are clear team selection policies, high standards and expectations, sound practice and coaching programmes and access to good facilities and equipment for players

6. PROFILE OF THE GAME

The level of effectiveness of cricket in a secondary school is frequently a reflection of the level of interest and attitude to cricket by the Principal and/or senior management. If this is significant then the game will be promoted within the school through coach support, team and player recognition, and the provision of quality facilities and equipment. The profile of the game will be such that students will want to be part of it, as they will receive positive reinforcement for their involvement. This is one of the key reasons for the popularity of the game in many traditional boys' and girls' schools.

NEW PLYMOUTH GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Why is cricket so successful at NPGHS?

- The school promotes playing cricket as a 'fun thing to do'
- Cricket is considered a significant sport within the school structure
- The success of the 1st XI team is acknowledged and valued by the school

[Women's Development Meeting, Christchurch, 2006]

CLUB/ADULT LEVEL

1. CLUB PLANNING

Appoint a club committee to develop a **RECRUITMENT PLAN** detailing a range of **STRATEGIES**, including where, when and how these are going to be implemented.

Set up a **LIAISON OFFICER** in the club to liaise with schools in the community, including developing close ties with their **DIRECTOR OF CRICKET** or **TEACHER-IN-CHARGE OF CRICKET**, and provide support for the entry, orientation and accommodation of new players into the club.

2. CLUB –SECONDARY SCHOOL LINKS – 'CLUBS IN SCHOOLS'

The major source of potential new players for a cricket club lies in their community secondary school[s]. It is therefore critical to the longevity of cricket clubs that they build strong links with their local secondary school[s], so they are in the best position to recruit school cricket leavers into their ranks. There are many ways of establishing these linkages [For a range of possibilities, see the 'School Support' and 'Club Assist' resource '**Effective Club-School and School-Club Links**'].

There is no doubt that the presence within a school of, either a CCC acting on behalf of a cricket club, or club personnel themselves, is

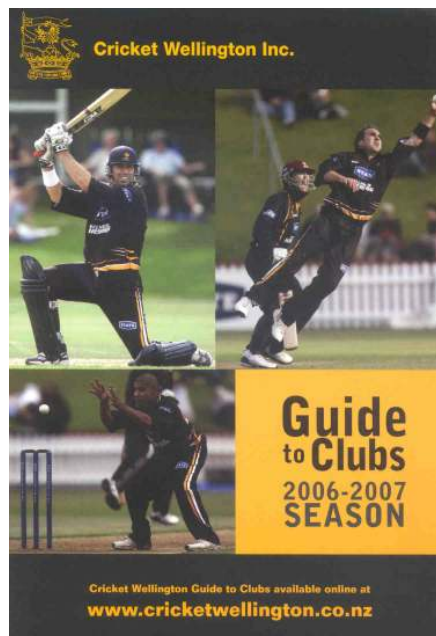
advantageous to enhancing these relationships and facilitating the transition of school cricket leavers into club cricket.

3. ASSOCIATION YEAR 13 DATABASES

As for Year 8 cricketers a number of cricket associations also compile Year 13 databases of cricket players leaving secondary school. Cricket clubs should use these databases to contact prospective cricketers living in their catchments and invite them to join their club. This can be done either by personal contact, telephone, email or letter. Don't underestimate the direct face-to-face approach.

4. ASSOCIATION CLUB GUIDES

Several cricket associations have produced excellent club guides for secondary school leavers profiling each of their cricket clubs. These are distributed to school leavers to provide them with quality information about each club's history, playing and coaching programmes, facilities and contact details in order to provide them with all possible options as they move from school to club cricket.



5. ADVERTISING

Many cricket clubs advertise their contact details in local government publications, cricket association handbooks, and in some cases, the yellow pages of telephone directories. Other ways to promote the benefits of joining a cricket club as well as displaying their contact details, registration days and training times include:

- **An 'Information Board' set up in a prominent roadside position at a club's ground**
- **Posters or flyers placed in local shops or distributed in community letter boxes**
- **Local newspapers**
- **School newsletters**
- **Club or association websites**

6. PERSONAL CONTACT

A frequent source of new club members is through them being introduced by current members. Encourage current players to actively recruit their friends or work colleagues. Be proactive and write, email or telephone

cricketers that you hear may be moving to your community and invite them to join your cricket club.

Canvas secondary school players to ascertain their desire to play for your cricket club. Go to school assemblies and talk to those interested about the advantages of joining. Remember young school leaver cricketers usually like to go where their friends want to play so target the whole group of players not just individuals.

Keep a record of previous junior players. As they are due to finish secondary school contact them to ensure they return to the senior club.

Contact past players to see if they want to be involved with new modified shortened versions of the game that may be on offer, such as Twenty20 cricket or flexible village cricket played on Sundays every 4-5 weeks during the summer, or be on a list of 'stand-by' players who may not want to play on a regular basis, but who are available to fill-in occasionally throughout the season.

7. MODIFIED FLEXIBLE COMPETITIONS

Increasingly, societal change has for varying reasons influenced players to select the format of the game that best suits their **TIME AVAILABILITY**. As a result nearly half of all adult cricketers now participate in some shorter version, modified cricket. Such competitions are often midweek, provide a 'pay-as-you-play' option, and make no demands for practices, uniform or the need to play every week. Clubs and cricket associations need to understand these trends and try and accommodate participant needs with a range of flexible cricket options if they want to recruit new players, retain current players, and attract back ex-players.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

The pivotal strategy of the national development programme is **RETENTION**. This is about providing the appropriate support, services and opportunities to develop and keep players in the game and should be the main objective of schools and cricket clubs.

Many players play the game and then for varying reasons they give up or dropout. Why do players discontinue the game? Research shows that the main reasons players **DISCONTINUE** playing cricket include: competition from other activities, concerns about lack of ability to play the game so participants fear failure or injury, lack of involvement in the game, the time involved in playing the game, and dissatisfaction with the coach in terms of the lack of coaching and/or coach support and encouragement.

Many of these 'negatives' about the game and player development can be addressed through proactive **RETENTION STRATEGIES**. Schools and clubs need to be aware of how some perceive cricket and ensure that they meet the needs, interests and abilities of all those keen to participate in the game. More time and energy should be spent on keeping players than on continuously chasing new ones. The health and wellbeing of the game in schools and cricket clubs are dependent upon it!

PRIMARY/JUNIOR LEVEL

1. FIRST IMPRESSION/EXPERIENCE

Junior cricket is about fun, enjoyment, friendship, participation, skill development and competition. It is the foundation for New Zealand's main summer game.

The main motives for young children to play cricket are to have fun, make new friends, socialise and learn new skills. Schools and clubs must understand this and make every effort to ensure the first experience of the game for children and their parents is a **POSITIVE** one. Create a friendly environment in which both children and parents are made to feel welcome and are given plenty of **PRAISE** and **ENCOURAGEMENT** for their involvement.

A child's first impression of a sport is vital and the MILO Have-A-Go Cricket and MILO Kiwi Cricket programmes have been set up so that everyone has the chance to display their skills in every session/game. Children love the times when it is their turn to bat, to bowl and to wicketkeep as well as the chances they get to catch and throw the ball, and to laugh and have fun with their friends.

2. COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to retain players and their families. For new players and parents make sure they are provided with clear guidelines and expectations, in terms of when and where games or practices are scheduled, what players require by way of clothing [including caps or hats], footwear, equipment [if necessary], sunscreen food and drink, and how parents can become involved as **VOLUNTEERS**, either as coaches or assisting with general supervision, scoring, umpiring, transport and/or social activities. Make sure they are included and made to feel part of the game in your school or club.

For existing players, don't assume that they will just turn up and register again; telephone, email and/or send letters to players and their parents, and/or teachers prior to the beginning of the season to remind them about the start of the season, the date and venue of registration as well as the

playing options available. A letter or email could also have a registration form attached.

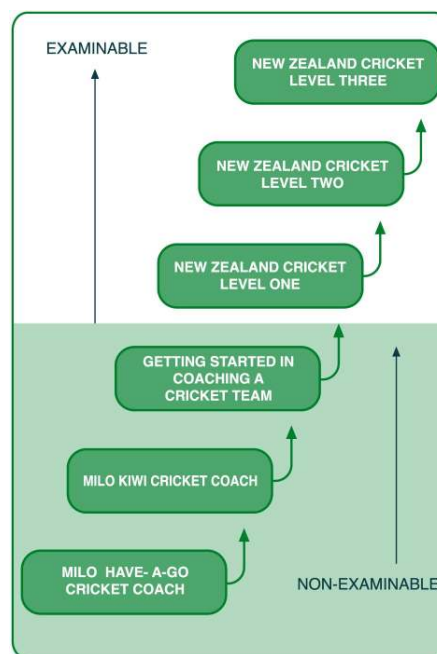
3. **COACH EDUCATION and POSITIVE COACHES**

Encourage parents and teachers to train as **COACHES** at the level of their children. New Zealand cricket has a six step **COACH DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY** which is aligned with the player development pathway. The first three introductory courses are aimed as parents and teachers. They are free, non-examinable and delivered regularly by the CCCs in each cricket association.

Schools and clubs should take advantage of these **COACH EDUCATION** opportunities for their parents and/or teachers and ensure all those involved with organising and running MILO Have-A-Go Cricket, MILO Kiwi Cricket and conventional hardball cricket are trained as

COACHES so their children receive the best quality coaching as well as enjoy the experience.

Good coaches who enjoy the game of cricket, relate well to their players, and are enthusiastic about teaching them the fundamental skills and values of the game are the main reasons players will return next season. To ensure players stay in the game coaches must create a positive atmosphere in which players are treated fairly and praised for their efforts. The retention of players is closely associated with the critical role of the coach and the level of support, encouragement, opportunity and instruction they give to all players. Make every effort to recruit, educate and assist good coaches carry out their roles.



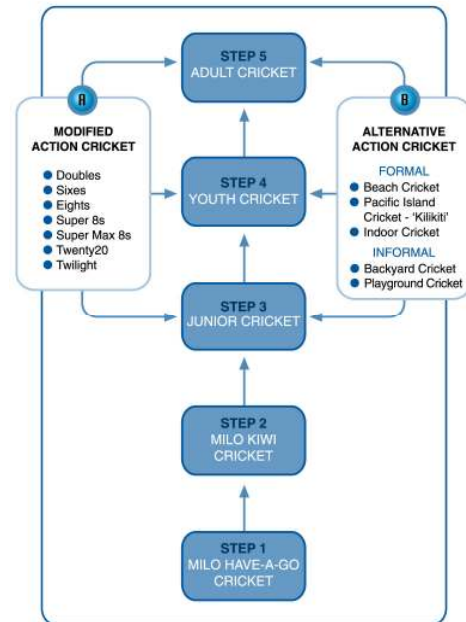
‘The role of the coach is to ensure that everyone who comes within his/her influence enjoys their cricket more.’

‘Cricket should be fun. Take the fun out of cricket and you will take the kids out of the game.’

4. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The most successful schools and cricket clubs have a **PLAYING PATHWAY** that allows young cricketers to progressively acquire the skills and values of the game and to make the transition through youth to adult cricket. Young players progress along the pathway at varying rates.

Schools and cricket clubs should provide appropriate opportunities for boys' and girls' to participate and enjoy cricket at their level of interest, ability and maturity. To do this they need to deliver cricket programmes which offer young cricketers a progression of clearly identifiable steps in



terms of play, skill development and competitive challenge.

MILO Have-A-Go Cricket is the first step on the New Zealand Cricket **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY** and introduces youngsters to the fundamental skills of the game, it is followed by MILO Kiwi Cricket which is both a modified version of the game and a skill development programme,

before players make the transition into various formats of conventional junior cricket.

5. FLEXIBLE MODIFIED CRICKET

At the primary/junior level programmes such as MILO Have-A-Go Cricket and MILO Kiwi Cricket should be **FLEXIBLE** in their scheduling. This will bring more commitment from players and their parents. Arrange to run these programmes when the majority of parents are available to assist, as their children's presence is dependent on that of their parents. Move away from Saturday mornings and look at midweek, afterschool or early evening options. Have a sausage sizzle and encourage a family picnic atmosphere. This allows the multi-use of cricket grounds and gives working parents, with more than one child, more options to be involved in the game.

Schools and cricket clubs also need to consider offering more **MODIFIED, SHORTENED VERSIONS** of the game [eg. 6 a-side, 8 a-side]. These create more opportunities for youngsters to have fun and be involved in

the action. Players only develop as cricketers when they have contact with the ball. Lesser numbers gives everyone the chance to have a turn to bat, to bowl and to field the ball in every game. Few sports are able to guarantee all participants such an opportunity to display their skills. Less is frequently more for many young cricketers!

Shorter version formats of the game also allow more flexibility with scheduling, and by reducing the time commitment, they make cricket more palatable for parents and easier for them to become involved as volunteers [eg. coaches].

6. PLAYER SKILLS and OPPORTUNITIES

The focus of the New Zealand Cricket MILO Have-A-Go Cricket and MILO Kiwi Cricket programmes is **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**. By ensuring players have fun while being properly taught the basic cricket skills and game sense will increase their ability to compete and enjoy the game and their likelihood of staying in the game.



Too often players are left by schools and cricket clubs to discover the basic skills of the game by trial and error. Unfortunately many of these players find the game difficult to play, especially as they make the transition to hardball cricket. Fear of failure or injury, and/or receiving limited opportunities because of a lack of ability, sees players giving up and leaving the sport. Cricket clubs and schools must invest in their players' if they hope to retain them in the game.

Coaches also need to ensure that all players are given an equal opportunity during matches to bat and bowl irrespective of ability. Apart from rotating players to make sure everyone gets a 'fair go' to bat, bowl and field, schools and cricket clubs can also reduce the number of players in teams down to 6-8. This provides more opportunities for youngsters to have fun, get to bowl, catch, bat, run and throw and reduces the amount of time waiting time in the field or watching from the boundary.

7. ENTERING SCHOOL TEAMS IN NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

Since 2000 New Zealand Cricket has offered full primary and intermediate schools the opportunity to enter their first



or making available for purchase, clearly identifiable cricket clothing [eg. shirts, caps, hats]. Junior players certainly enjoy this point of difference.

Regular social activities [eg. sausage sizzles or barbeques, end-of-year functions at clubrooms or a local family restaurant, the annual prizegiving ceremony] are all good ways for schools and cricket clubs to create a friendly, welcoming environment for players and their parents, and provide excellent opportunities to thank people and acknowledge their achievements or contributions.

SECONDARY/YOUTH LEVEL

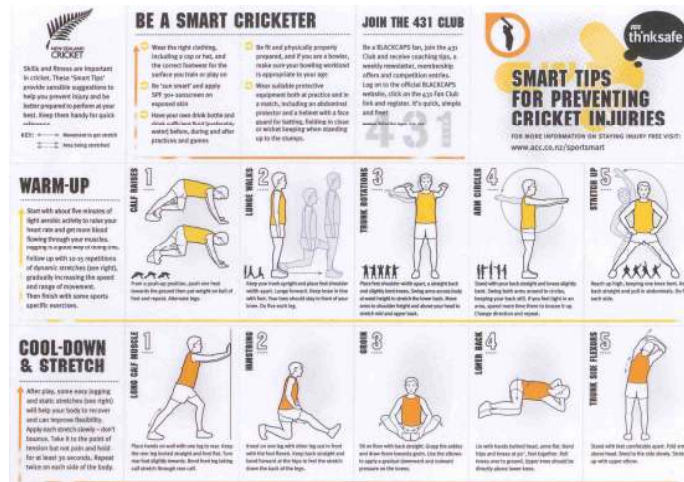
1. LEVEL OF ORGANISATION

This relates particularly to how well the game is run within secondary schools, and includes the effectiveness of the Director or Teacher-in-Charge of Cricket, the consistency of team selections, player expectations and standards, the availability and quality of coaches, the scheduling and organisation of regular practices, the availability of suitable competition formats, and the accessibility and standard of facilities and equipment. All these are a measure of how well the sport is lead and managed and have a direct impact on players wanting to play and stay in the game.

2. COMMUNICATION

This is critical at all levels. Players need to be informed about team selections and protocols, practice schedules and draws. This can be accomplished through regular team meetings, assembly notices, newsletters and information posted on a specific cricket noticeboard. Some schools have also compiled comprehensive cricket handbooks for players and coaches, with team lists and contact details, draws and ground locations, codes of conduct and spaces to record team and player statistics.

A recent ACC initiative 'Smart Tips' makes the latter an easy exercise. A coach can go to www.acc.co.nz/smarttips and create an information sheet for his/her team by clicking on 'Create Your Own Smart Tips', then 'Choose Your Sport', and go to 'Cricket' before customising the sheet from the available templates and



printing it off. The information sheet has suggestions that will help players prevent injuries and perform better [see side one of the 'Cricket Smart Tips' above]. A coach can add to this by selecting and editing different templates [eg. contact lists, checklists, goals, team information, weekly training plan and a calendar of events].

3. COACH EDUCATION

The development of suitably qualified coaches is one of the key elements of any secondary school cricket programme. Providing coaches with the opportunity to undertake **COACH EDUCATION COURSES** and acquire coaching qualifications is important in this respect.

The Director of Coaching or Teacher-in-Charge of Cricket has an important role to play here, through organising and providing professional development opportunities such as coaching updates, specialist coaching clinics, access to local association coach education courses and membership of the New Zealand Cricket Coaches' Association, for all coaches involved so they are able to keep abreast of the latest trends and best practice.

4. STRUCTURED PRACTICES AND QUALITY COACHING

Increasingly young players are becoming more discerning and expect the best opportunities to progress in the game. Practice sessions therefore need to be regular, well planned and managed by coaches who are able to relate to, and educate the players by adapting their coaching to the level and ability of the team. For suggestions on how to set up a quality practice and coaching programme in a secondary school see the New Zealand Cricket 'School Support' resources:

- **'An Effective Coaching Structure for Secondary Schools'**
- **'Coaching and Practice Plans: Implementing an Effective Coaching Programme in Secondary Schools and Clubs'**

5. COMPETITION FORMATS

At the secondary school level players start to rationalise their sports commitments. In cricket some want to play competitively and aspire to the 1st XI, while others want to participate more socially. To cater for the diversity of player needs, interests and abilities a number of different duration, competition formats, scheduled afterschool and on Saturdays, should be offered. This increases the attraction of the game and gives players a choice so they are more inclined to stay involved.

6. ENTERING SCHOOL TEAMS IN NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

Since 1990 the national secondary school boys' **GILLETTE CUP** competition has provided a great opportunity for schools to enter their first elevens and play other schools in their cricket association, and beyond if they are able to advance. The success of the Gillette Cup later led to the formation of similar national secondary school competitions for girls [1994] and junior boys [2004] – both sponsored by the **NEW ZEALAND COMMUNITY TRUST**.



Over 400 school teams are now entered in these competitions annually with eight in each contest going on to play in the national finals' tournaments. These competitions provide high quality options for schools to profile the game within their schools and communities and to elevate their players into representative cricket. For example, 45 first class players and 11 Black Caps have represented their schools in the Gillette Cup finals.

Many schools also organise additional **INTERSCHOOL FIXTURES** for their teams, and/or participate in local or regional competitions [eg. Central North Island 'Super 8' competition], and/or take their senior and/or developing teams overseas to play in international tournaments or against a range of schools or age group selections. There is no doubt that the profile and publicity surrounding these, especially the latter, highlight a school's cricket programme and act as a major recruitment and retention strategy, particularly for the keen, talented player.

7. QUALITY FACILITIES

There is no doubt that having high quality turf and/or artificial pitches is a must for players being able to perform at their best and enjoy their involvement. This is further reinforced by having well surfaced and maintained practice nets. If players cannot practice properly and play on well prepared pitches, then they will frequently opt to do something else that is more rewarding. Practice and playing surfaces should be the number one priority for cricket in secondary schools if they are to successfully promote, grow and sustain the game.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is important to recognise and celebrate success at all levels of the game. The performances of teams and individuals should be highlighted

and acknowledged. Assembly notices, newsletters, items in school newspapers and magazines, noticeboards, websites, 'Honours Boards' to recognise milestones, and photographs to acknowledge teams and individuals, all provide rewarding options to do this as does an 'Information Board' in front of the school advertising the dates of upcoming cricket fixtures, and the inclusion of results in local newspapers.

CLUB/ADULT LEVEL

1. PLANNING and ORGANISATION

As with recruitment, cricket clubs should have a committee responsible for designing and implementing a range of **RETENTION STRATEGIES**. These should be focused on ensuring that **CLUB INFRASTRUCTURES** are sound in terms of their leadership, management, financial capabilities and ability to effectively service the varying playing, practice and social needs and interests of their members. This not only attracts players, but is a significant factor in retaining their involvement.

2. COMMUNICATION – CLUB LIAISON

It is important for clubs to keep their members in touch with club policies, procedures and performances. Newsletters, noticeboards, emails, posters/flyers and websites are all of value in achieving this. Members like to know what is expected of them and what is happening in terms of club playing, practice and social activities.

A **CLUB LIASON OFFICER** should be appointed to liaise with community secondary schools and welcome and assist new players, especially those leaving secondary school, to integrate into the club.

3. COACH EDUCATION

Qualified coaches are a prerequisite to assisting players meet their playing objectives. Players are frequently drawn to, and remain within a club, because of a quality coach or coaches and what they can offer. To support the efforts of coaches and improve their effectiveness cricket clubs should give them every opportunity to attend appropriate New Zealand Cricket coach education courses. This will ensure that they are qualified to confidently and effectively deliver a high quality coaching programme to all players.

4. YOUTH TEAMS or ACADEMY

A number of cricket clubs have set up specific teams for young players entering their ranks which allows them to keep together and eases their transition. Other clubs have established **ACADEMIES** for their young cricketers. While they may play for different teams within the club they are

bought together once a week to attend carefully structured practices and enjoy each others company.

5. STRUCTURED PRACTICES AND QUALITY COACHING

Along with quality coaches, the delivery of structured club practice sessions with clear objectives and associated progressive coaching is vital to retaining players, especially those who want to go further in the game. However, make sure there is some flexibility in training and playing requirements to allow for family and other commitments. The availability of a well organised and administered practice and coaching programme is a must for a club's sustainability.

6. CONSISTENT SELECTION PROCESS

Players want to know where they stand in terms of 'What team they are in?', 'What is required to achieve promotion?', and 'What is expected of them in terms of team performance and commitment?' Players need to feel they have been treated fairly and consistently, so the process must be transparent. Cricket clubs must get this right by having a designated **SELECTOR** or **SELECTION PANEL** with a clear set of operating guidelines.

7. QUALITY FACILITIES

The most important facility for competitive cricketers is the quality of club pitches, followed close behind by the standard of the practice nets. For the social player the priority is perhaps having access to a comfortable clubhouse/pavilion with a convivial atmosphere. Whatever, club playing, practising and social facilities need to be sufficient, adequate, and well maintained and cared for so that players are proud to use them and host opponents.

8. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

These are frequently delegated to a social committee. Regular functions, in addition to use of the clubrooms/pavilion after a day's play, need to be planned and advertised within a cricket club. Social occasions can be spread through the season or held at select times such as registration day, Christmas and the end of the season prizegiving. Involving players in this way gives them a greater sense of belonging, affiliation and enjoyment of the club.

Where possible, acknowledge the efforts of players and teams. This can be done

ANTHONY A.H.	1905-06-07-08	ANDERSON G.F.	1949-50
CALLAWAY S.T.	1905-06	DAWSON F.E.	1950
BAIN K.B.	1906	HAYES J.A.	1950-51-52-53-54
WILLIAMS K.S.	1906	BELL W.	1955-57-58
NORMAN A.	1907-08-09-10-11-12	KIDDEY J.W.	1955-57-58-59-60 1961-62-63-64
ELLIS W.H.	1908	MOTZ R.C.	1957-58-59-60-61-63 1964-65-66-67-68-69
CARTON T.	1909-10	BROAD C.L.	1966-67
CAYGILL E.R.	1910-11-12-B	ANDERSON R.W.	1967-68
WHITTA H.B.	1911-12-13	D'ALVERGNE P.G.	1970-73-74
NORTH R.H.	1917	STEAD D.W.	1970-71-72-75-76 1977-78-79-80-81 1982-83-84-85-86
GUINEY C.E.	1918	McNALLY S.R.	1979-80-81-82
EVANS C.E.	1919-20-21-26-27-28	THORN L.D.A.	1979-80
FULLER A.C.	1920-21-22-23	BATEMAN G.C.	1979-80-81-82-83
POWELL R.F.J.	1922	ISHERWOOD B.P.	1971-72-73
RIX C.T.	1922	MACKLE J.M.	1980-81-82
COX A.	1924-25-26	ABERHART D.C.	1984
ROBERTS A.W.	1927-28-29-30-31-32 1933-34-35-36-37-38 1939-40	HARTSHORN D.J.	1985-86-87-88
ALLEN P.F.	1928-29	STEAD G.R.	1933-34-35-36-37 1938-39-40-41-42 1943-44-45-46-47
POWELL J.L.	1928-29-31-32	FREW R.M.	1934-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42
GIBBS C.S.	1929	MAXWELL H.D.	1937-38
JACOBS J.	1929-30-31	HARRIS A.	1937-38
ANDREWS S.	1933-34-35	WALKER D.A.	1939-40
DUNNETT D.M.	1933-34	SHAW H.J.	1939-40-41-42-43-44-45
STRINGER G.H.	1933-34	STEWART S.L.	2004-05-06-07-08
SCOTT R.H.	1947-48-54		
WHITFORD Q.R.D.	1947		

through club newsletters, noticeboards, websites, making sure results are forwarded each week to the cricket association for publication in the local newspaper, and the inclusion of team accounts and statistics in annual club reports. For clubs with a clubhouse/pavilion make sure teams report their performances at regular aftermatch functions and milestones are recognised via 'Honours' Boards' and team photographs.

9. CLUB ENVIRONMENT

Make sure your cricket club is clean and well maintained. Try and create a positive, comfortable, **FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT** that members enjoy being in, and are proud to host opponents and their families and friends. Cricket clubs need to adopt socially responsible policies towards alcohol and must be 'smokefree' so they are safe, healthy and welcoming.

Where possible, involve players in developing the cricket club's plans and programmes.

Encourage them to make a contribution to the club and its future progress by taking on an **OFF-FIELD RESPONSIBILITY** that maintains their interest and increases their involvement in the running of the club.



CONCLUSION

The continued existence of the game in schools and the longevity of cricket clubs are very much dependent upon **SCHOOL** and **CLUB ADMINISTRATORS** realising the importance of both **RECRUITMENT** and **RETENTION**. A planned approach is required involving a series of **PROACTIVE STRATEGIES** to encourage players to 'play and stay' in the game.

This resource outlines a number, but not exhaustive, list of such strategies. While different strategies will suit different circumstances, schools and clubs need to ensure they design and implement a suitable combination of strategies if they are to grow and sustain the game. Irrespective of which strategies are adopted, they all require schools and clubs to work closely with people, to understand their cricketing needs, and to fulfil those as best they can. To be able to achieve this, there is no substitute for **PEOPLE MANAGEMENT** in terms of personal contact, care and attention!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This School Support and Club Assist resource booklet was written and compiled by Alec Astle, National Development Manager and Chris Ferguson, National Coaching and Development Assistant, New Zealand Cricket