

## **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN WAIKATO SCHOOLS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Three years ago. 2013, the Waikato Indoor Bowling Centre was approached by our local sport body... Sport Waikato. The Waikato Centre Executive attended a meeting along with Craig Whiteside (NZIB) at Sport Waikato headquarters.

The KiwiSport 'Outdoor' Bowls Officer, Barry Rajendram, (An Indoor & Outdoor bowler himself) was very keen to have us on board as he was having a reasonable response to an effective outdoor bowls coaching programme in primary & secondary schools in the Waikato district.

The Waikato Indoor Bowling Centre Executive could see this programme as a very good opportunity to get indoor bowls out to our communities again, via our schools.

It was about getting as many kids playing indoor bowls & then hopefully the flow on affect was to add growth to our ailing memberships in our clubs. Like other districts we too are in crisis mode losing 50-60 people from our membership base per year for various, with genuine reasons, and we aren't bringing a lot of new people back through to balance this.

All Schools have communities & clubs for every activity, so why not highlight their bowling club in the area as a fun place to be and not just for the Grandads' & Grandmas'.....a perception of our game.

### **TO START:**

A meeting was set up mid May 2013 between the Waikato IBC Executive, Sport Waikato Kiwisport Co-Ordinator & Bowls Waikato (Outdoor) to discuss indoor bowls linking their current strategies & how the Kiwisport Outdoor Bowls Officer could help to assist the delivery of indoor bowls into primary & Secondary School in the winter period, to benefit both sports.

At that meeting we all agreed that this programme should go ahead.

To get things started we needed a few things:

- **Equipment** sourced – mats & bowls - which were located from various areas in our region, held in storage following clubs', Care & Craft Groups, going into recess etc. We took mats & bowls into schools (some schools now have their own mats & bowls) or want to purchase sets.
- **Volunteers** - to assist the Kiwisport Officer & project Energizer Staff to support and deliver the programme at primary school level - 4 - 6 weeks coaching. Secondary Schools followed.

At least three or four helpers were rostered per school, and the programme was put in place during PE classes and lunchtime activities

We needed at least 30 Volunteers who were willing to travel & help run programs. Dealing with classes of 30+ students. We put through 2000+ students through our programme. Even Whole School, or part school, a couple of hours or whole days at school, depending what was required.

### **Volunteers have been the real key to this programme being so successful.**

The Kiwisport Officer contacted all schools in Term One.....Sport Waikato can do this, whereas the Waikato Centre cannot. We have sent out brochures in the past and they just get lost in schools mail system. An entry form from Sport Waikato is extremely well received. On completion of the entry form the school is locked in for coaching. Programmes introduced are either actual skills & drills training for the school competitions or purely 'tasters' just to show the game to students.

After 4-6 weeks of training/coaching in schools for Year 7 & 8's (11-12yrs) from May - July, Year 9-13 (13-18yrs) through August.....Kiwisport and the Waikato Indoor Bowling Centre select students to represent their school at the Inter-School Competition.

The Inter-school competitions have been very popular, already schools have indicated they are planning to include Indoor & Outdoor Bowls in Schools in their PE programme in 2016.

At the Inter School events the Waikato Centre is full (22 mats down) at each competition - boys one day - girls the next. For the Inter School events Sport Waikato provides the medals /trophies & certificates, NZIB provides certificates of participation to every student. The Waikato Centre provides the volunteers (one on every mat) and the venue hire, morning tea (tea,coffee,biscuit). After the event every student goes home with certificates & brochures guiding them to the game and clubs in their area.

This year being our 3rd we decided to ask for a \$2 entry fee at the Inter-School Competitions.....this would go towards Affiliating the students to New Zealand Indoor Bowls, 272 students are now affiliated. For their \$2 Fee they get 4-6 weeks coaching, a super Inter-School Comp to play in, skills & drill sheets & brochures to encourage them to attend clubs in their communities.

## **SUMMARY**

Over the three year period this programme has grown from strength to strength, however funding it could now become a problem. New Zealand Indoor Bowls gave the Waikato Centre a Grant in 2013 to cover Volunteers Mileage which was very much appreciated. In 2014 we received a small amount of money from Trust Waikato, but were unsuccessful this year...reason being that the Trust felt the Centre had its own funds to support this programme.

Our committees have now agreed that we would unite with Bowls Waikato (Outdoor) and have collectively make application for funding to Sport Waikato for 2016 season to cover at least 25-30 hours per week for our Kiwisport Outdoor/Indoor Bowls Officer. Our Executive meets with Sport Waikato & Bowls Waikato (Outdoor) on a regular basis to support each other and make sure we are all on the same track....without Sport Waikato - Kiwisport leading the charge we would not have this wonderful programme in success mode.

It may not mean these kids will join a club right now, but at least we will have captured their hearts & interest for at least the next 3-5 years or more while they are at school.

We have completed three great years, there soon won't be a school in the Waikato district that hasn't seen and played the game, it's a mammoth task and lots of help and patience is required, with the right people in place we will do this. We are going to try something unique, combining with Bowls Waikato (outdoor) and having family nights during our coaching months, May – June (Year 7 & 8) August – September (Year 9-13) just so the students who are attending coaching sessions at their school have somewhere to go to actually put their techniques into practice.

We are targeting key clubs (4) to be involved in running these evenings. Eight schools have registered their interest. This will progress to After School Programmes in their bowls / school communities as well, or vice versa. Five Schools have confirmed their interest in an After School Programme for Tem 2 & 3 2016. Prime target is to involve and encourage club members to be more pro-active, not only with playing the game, but also administrating, coaching, and doing whatever they can do to help.

We will be delivering this programme forever if that's what it takes, so long as we have Sport Waikato Kiwisport and our super volunteers on board.

**Kids Love to Play Bowls - they find it extremely competitive - they enjoy the techniques - they love the social aspects the game offers - and are keen to rise to higher levels i.e. play for their Region, Province, their Country...but first they have to join a club...and that's the hardest thing to get them to do.**

**Jenny Chapman**

**Waikato Indoor Bowling Centre – Sport Development Officer**