

A Family Guide for Junior Players



Why play adult hockey for ABC whilst still at school?

As a club, ABC has a policy of promoting its youth players to play adult hockey and learn their skills from experienced hockey players. The older players enjoy the mix with a youthful feel to many of the lower grade teams and relish the opportunity to share the vast hockey knowledge they have. This extra training and match practice are valuable in the development of the younger players. If they continue to only play with their age range, then they do not get the experience of playing against different styles of play with players of varying fitness and ability levels.

ABC has been promoting youth players in the lower grades for several years and is now starting to see these players make their way through to the top grades. The experience they gained at a young age has helped the players in both their school and representative teams and hopefully helped them to enjoy the sport as a result.

As a club we try to ensure that all the players get equal game time, it is often the case the older players need longer rests!

Will playing for the school and a club be too much?

With many of the younger players (Under 14 and Under 15) one school practice and one game are not enough to see a huge improvement. With an extra club practice and game, and these should not clash, the development in their game sense, fitness, skill and overall enjoyment of the sport will be seen. The schools also notice a development in confidence, hockey awareness and ability as a result.

If the load gets too much, then as a club we are flexible to allow the students not to attend training. This is especially important when students start their NCEA exams as they get older.

The ABC club pathway is an important feature for players to transition from school to club hockey, many continue to play once they have left school and this is not only for the elite players but for those players who are playing for the enjoyment and to keep fit. There has also been the benefit of many parents starting to play hockey so that they can compete with other family members. Many teams have a number of father/son and mother/daughter combinations and, with the size of the club, there are often families competing against each other when two ABC teams play in the same grade. These 'local' derbies are hugely competitive, fun and enjoyable for all.

ABC is truly a family club with player development pathways.