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Girls Smash Modified Girls Only Cricket Programme

Theme:
Participation

 Girls Smash Modified Girls Only Cricket Programme

 [Jess Davidson](#)

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 New Zealand Cricket

Girls Smash is a modified, girls-only cricket programme for years 3 -6 (going to year 8 in some areas) developed by Otago Cricket in 2016.

The programme is all about having fun and giving cricket a go, there is no experience necessary and all equipment is provided. All games are played in a central location and are short and action packed helping to create a festival atmosphere.

Girls Smash has experienced year on year growth and is changing the way cricket is delivered and perceived across the community cricket network.

What is the purpose of the project?

For Otago Cricket, the 2014/15 playing census identified there were only two junior girls-only team across the entire Major Association. Otago Cricket acknowledged they needed a new plan and a way of engaging young girls to the sport. They developed a strategy of targeted growth and developed a pathway map, specifically identifying what opportunities exist for females to play with, and against, other females.

The Community Development Officers (CDOs) brainstormed ideas for a suitable cricket product which aligned with both their female strategy and the national cricket programme at the time. Girls Smash was created.

The purpose of Girls Smash:

- To introduce female participants to the game of cricket in a fun and social manner. Girls play with and against other girls in short matches using lightweight equipment and a soft ball.
- Participants to develop the fundamental skills of throwing, hitting and striking through game based play.
- Utilise 'Game Leaders' to facilitate skill learning during game play and to grow the leadership skills of young females in the community.

What were the enablers that proved successful?

IT'S GOT TO BE FUN. GIRLS ONLY!

- Girls enjoy playing with girls, and against other girls. They are with their friends and having fun. Being held in one, central location enables girls to see other girls playing and having fun, which is a big part of 'normalising' cricket involvement for young females.
- "We love that it's just girls - my daughter wouldn't have tried cricket otherwise and she has absolutely loved it!"
- With all the girls wearing their free Girls Smash t-shirt, it also creates a fun vibe. They easily recognize each other, and it becomes an 'equalizer', as everyone is the same.
- Teams are 6-aside, allowing for optimal engagement with everyone having an equal opportunity to bat/bowl.
- Rules and the technical aspects of cricket aren't important at Girls Smash – girls can bowl by throwing if they like. Skill development occurs through playing and though assistance from the Games Leaders, rather than drills and activities.
- Game Leaders also have an impact on the experience for each girl – they are young female leaders (normally Years 9-13) who umpire and control each game, providing encouragement and assistance with helpful tips to the girls as they play.
- It is important Girls Smash is a fun and easy experience for parents and teachers as well. Keeping the time to 40 minutes, starting straight after school and always at the same location helps make it an easy commitment for parents. It's important that parents and teachers also understand the philosophy of the programme – which is focused on fun, and not technical skills training.



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[Girls Cricket Festival \(2020\)| Otago Cricket Assn.](#)

What impact did your project have?

Girls Smash participation has grown steadily over the past five seasons across Otago, to peak at 116 teams (700 participants) in the recent 2020/21 season.

Before the 2016/17 season, there was no alternative programme that junior girls teams were involved in. So the vast majority of teams (73) that joined in the 2016/17 season were completely new to cricket. This represents a real (and significant) increase in participation –not simply girls switching from other cricket programmes or teams to Girls Smash.

As well as the increase in participation in Girls Smash, participation has also increased in other aspects of junior and youth female cricket over the same time period.

- In Oamaru, an increase in participation at the Valley Sports Club has seen the creation of x2 female only teams for the first time –participating in the intermediate and youth grades. This has created a genuine girls-only participation pathway in the rural Otago town.
- Dunedin’s mid-week Secondary School girls-only hard ball competition doubled from x6 teams to x12 teams within two seasons. This has seen the implementation of two pools in the competition.
- In 2015, Otago had only one district team (Otago Country) represented in the South Island Primary School Girls Festival. During the 2021/22 season, 6 x teams from around the Otago Region attended the same festival.

What were the outcomes for women?

Alongside increased participation of junior girls, other benefits have also been experienced:

- Changing the way girls and their parents think about cricket – it can be short, action packed, inclusive and fun
- "My daughter loved smashing the ball and I like that she finally realised she is actually pretty good at cricket, great confidence builder".
- Development of Game Leaders - x20 Trained Game Leaders.
- Empowering a group of young female cricket leaders to confidently facilitate games and be leaders within sport and their community.
- "My daughter loved coming along each week. It was her first year of giving it a go and really enjoyed it and enjoyed playing with friends from her school. All of the game leaders were amazing too."
- Knowledge sharing and connections with other sports – both football and rugby reached out to learn more about Girls Smash. Subsequent cross code, girls-only, multisport have a go events have been delivered across the region to over 800 participants.

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- [Girls Smash Guide.pdf 690KB PDF](#)
- [Case Study spotlight Girls Smash 2021.pdf 1.1MB PDF](#)

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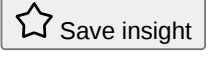
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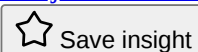


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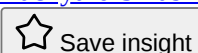


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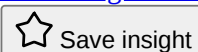


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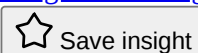


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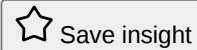


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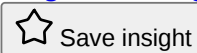


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