

# CASE STUDY

## Integrated Football League - Fremantle CBC

### Supporting partners

- WAAFL
- West Australian Football Commission
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- AUSRAPID
- Inclusion WA



### Background

After seeing the results of Australian rules football leagues for people with intellectual disabilities in Victoria and South Australia, the Western Australian Amateur Football League (WAAFL) instigated a project to establish something similar in Western Australia.

### Project objectives

- Develop a pathway for those with an intellectual disability from 16 years of age.
- Support community clubs to motivate volunteers to promote a quality game environment for those participants with an intellectual disability.
- Utilise Australian rules football as a vehicle to promote community engagement, education, leadership and employment initiatives for those with an intellectual disability.
- Build the relationships of those with an intellectual disability and the community through football.

### What happened

- An Integrated Football League Committee was formed in 2009 to gauge interest, build a database of players/organisations to be involved, establish initial funding and coordinate 'come and try' days.
- A database of 'come and try' day participants was established.

- The database was used to decide on suitable, well established amateur clubs who were approached to explore potential involvement and be familiarised with the concept. Three clubs agreed to develop Integrated Football teams – Fremantle CBC, Lynwood/Ferndale and Kingsway.
- Each of these clubs worked as part of a sub-committee to develop a strategic plan for their Integrated Football teams.
- During 2010 the players were playing stand-alone social games once per month.
- A series of new 'come and try' days were organised for 2010. As a result, two new teams were formed - High Wycombe and Warnbro.
- A five-team competition was formed for the 2011 season with games played regularly on Saturday, immediately after the home team's league game. A carnival-style grand final day concluded the season with Fremantle CBC winning the inaugural grand final.

### Project (interim) results

- Players with an intellectual disability gain a complete football experience. From training and playing in a team environment, to engaging with other players and members of their club through club activities.
- The Fremantle CBC Integrated Football players always attend club functions, are dressed in club apparel and socially integrate with other members of the club.

- The Fremantle CBC team has developed to include a full social calendar, including attending a quiz night, having players selected to play in a Life Members versus All Stars game, attending an end of season club dinner and visiting Parliament House where they met both the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Disabilities.
- One parent remarked that, “The program right from the outset has proved to be the most ‘normalising’ activity experienced by our son in his 18 years. What has emerged is a team of young men totally accepted and embraced by a mainstream football club. The program has provided the opportunity to increase physical fitness, to learn skills and to experience camaraderie in a ‘normal’ setting”.

## Where to from here?

- The committee aims to increase participation in 2012. Other clubs are following a similar model to Fremantle CBC in an effort to achieve this.
- Fremantle CBC is developing an off-season basketball team and beach training program to increase the players’ fitness levels and to keep the team together socially.
- The hope of parents is that the team will continue with football for many years to come, and the players say they can’t wait for pre-season training to start.

## Critical success factors

- Strong leadership and coordination from WAAFL.
- Strategic plan developed by WAAFL and the participating clubs to drive development of the league.
- Establishing the Integrated Football teams in pre-existing football clubs.
- Creating links to the disability sector to engage potential players.
- Moving games to Saturday afternoons has exposed the teams to a larger audience in an integrated setting.
- Training on the same night as the senior sides has increased the Integrated Football team’s exposure to the rest of the club.
- Weekly training keeps players involved, providing information exchange opportunities.
- Strong volunteer base to assist in team management, game day duties etc.
- Proactive team managers who persist with individuals and maintain regular communication.
- Reliable transport for the players - transport has proved to be an issue for some clubs.
- Supportive parent audience that is nurtured and given appropriate responsibility by the club.

## Project contact

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