

Managing the Coaching Process

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Player Development and the need for Change

Introduction

Football (Soccer) Wide Bay Zone Inc encompasses the major cities of Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg, as well as the North Burnett towns of Gayndah, Monto, Mundubbera and Biggenden - and all the areas between. It is a Zone of considerable geographic size and diversity. In 2007 it had 6045 registered Junior players - both male and female - from Under 7 to U18. It has 1553 female players and 4492 male players.

Within Football Queensland there is a recognised Pathway for Young Players.



The Centre of Excellence (C of E) is a High Level Football Queensland program aimed at the Best Zone Players. It will be used as an underpinning program to the Queensland State Teams

Due to Football Wide Bay's Physical Size it causes many transport issues and makes competition between the Centres a logistic hassle to organise.

The four larger centres - Gympie, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg attempted to host C of E training on a weekly Basis at the their own centres. In doing this they were able to ensure that the required numbers of 20 at each Centre was achieved. But in doing so the principles of it being a Centre of Excellence were lost. On carrying out investigations and visits to all Centres the following problems and observations were made.

- Coaching groups would include players as young as 10 and as old as 16.
- Coaches were unaware of the C of E principles and where it stood within the player's pathway.
- There was no Structure to the training.
- Players, who were not involved in the Zone Representative teams, were involved at the higher level of C of E.
- Players in one centre were being coached differently to the other centres.
- The program was being used to coach players for centre representative teams.

Once a visit had been made to each centre I took these observations to the Zone President and the relevant Standing Committee representatives, and from there with their support and backing spoke to the Presidents at each Centre to highlight that to ensure we complied with the players pathway there would need to be a re structuring of the Centre of Excellence program.

The President and the Standing Committee representatives fully backed my findings and in April 2007 all Centre of Excellence was halted.

It was planned to then set up the Centre of Excellence in one central place where players from all over the Zone would meet for training. Due to the fact of being central in the Zone the City of Maryborough was chosen as the venue for training. This meant that the furthest any parent or player had to travel was 90 minutes.

The squads had to be then set up into the age groups as guided by Football Queensland. The Squads were as follows: -

Under 10,11,12 Boys
Under 13,14 Boys
Under 15,16,17 Boys
Under 11,12,13 Girls
Under 14,15,16 Girls

Now came the task of ensuring the correct players were selected to participate. This was done by inviting players to trails where they were tested on six technical tests. Players below the grade were not invited to the Cof E.

In 2008 Football Queensland introduced the Rebel Junior Premier League to replace the State TIS events. It was deemed that the elite players from each Zone would play on a weekly basis against other Zones and players of a similar standard.

Wide Bay was included in the Northern Section. It was decided, mainly due to travel and Cost, that Zone Squads would only play once a month. These Squads would still train and play as a team on a weekly Basis.

Taking into account travel requirements of all Parents the following training structure was devised.

Once a week all age groups would train at either Gympie or Bundaberg. Here the boys would be grouped into double age groups i.e. Under 12 and Under 13 would train together. Players from Maryborough or Hervey Bay were to travel to either Gympie or Bundaberg. The emphasis on these training nights would be on the development of Technical Skills.

Then on a Thursday evening all Squads would train at Maryborough. Here, under the guidance of their respective Squad Coach, the emphasis on training would be on Team Structure, and the players roles within the team plan. Confirmation of understanding would be carried out on a Saturday by the Team playing in the newly formed Fraser Coast League.

All Squads apart from the Under 12 Boys would play up an age group in the Fraser Coast League. All games involving Wide Bay teams will be played at Maryborough as the first game of the Day to allow players and parents to return to their local CA's to either observe other siblings play or be actively involved in either coaching or officiating.

Players involved at this level will not be involved at Club or CA level.

To support these squads and provide a full coverage of Development Wide Bay will also have 2nd Tier Squads at the following age groups

Boys - Under 12, Under 13, Under 16/17 Boys

Girls – Under 15, Under 17, Open

These teams will train once a month, and will form the nucleus of the CA representative Squads that will compete in the Wide Bay Competition. It is envisaged that these teams will compete against other Zones in State Carnivals.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT DEAN MAY

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