AKTIVE

PROGRAMMES & COMPETITIONS TOOLKIT

HOW TO DESIGN AND MODIFY YOUR OFFERINGS

OVERVIEW

People choose to be physically active for many reasons. Whether it is for enjoyment, to spend time with family and friends, for fitness and health benefits or to challenge themselves, it is important to note that these reasons can and do change over time.

Providing a well-structured timetable of programmes that meets different levels of motivation and ability, can have a huge impact on getting more people involved in your club/code. Whatever types of activities your club/code offers, the best way to meet the needs of your community is to understand and offer what they want, when they want it, how they want it and with who they want to do it with.

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THE PURPOSE ·································

Auckland is a complex multi-cultural environment with many challenges and unparalleled opportunities to increase and sustain participation in sport and recreation. This has led to the establishment of *The Auckland Approach to Community Sport*, a strategic response aiming to create a world-class community sport system in *Tāmaki Makaurau*, community by community. This toolkit has been developed (and will be updated) based on insights and good practice examples from across Auckland.

The purpose of this programmes and competitions toolkit is to provide information, resources and ideas that will help clubs/codes create better, or build on current, offerings for their members and communities. It can be tailored and implemented as each club/code sees relevant.

What we mean when we say:
- **Programme –** a series of events that takes place over a period of time (such as a term or season)
- **Activity –** the types of opportunities (such as free time, a game or skill practice sessions) that are part of a programme
- **Competitions –** a standalone opportunity that takes place over a day or two.

UNDERSTAND WHO YOUR PROGRAMMES ARE FOR

When it comes to selecting a programme, many factors can influence the participant's decision – the coach, types of activities, time, cost, social interaction between members or facility. Rather than guess what programmes might be useful for your members and community, there is a more logical way your club/code can approach this. It starts with focusing on your current members and then considering the programmes that might attract new members.

Do you know your members?
- What is their age range?
- What gender do they identify as?
- What is their ethnicity?
- What do they do for work or education?
- What about their home and family demographics?

What are their behaviours?
- How often (days per week) do they want to participate?
- How challenging do they want this to be?
- What time of the day do they get active and for how long?
- What sort of activity do they prefer?

Do you understand their motivations?
- Do they have goals and if so, what are they?
- Why have they come to your club/code?
- What do they value?

Once you have answers to some of these questions, you can focus on creating and delivering quality programmes that meet your members' needs. For the best results, regularly check in with your members regarding what they want and let them help shape these programmes.

Click here for more information >>

PROGRAMME PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Before creating your programme, it is important to have a solid understanding of why the programme is needed based on who it is for. By having clear principles and insights, you can make informed decisions. The **Good Sports® >>** Spine is one tool that can help you reflect on whether or not you are helping the participant have a quality experience.

Aktive, Good Sports Spine (2019)

A good programme design should provide your participants with the right environment, opportunities and focus areas at the right time, that are specific and unique to their current stage of development and motivation needs.

Two key questions should be asked when determining your programme philosophy:

1 What behaviours should be emphasised at the various ages/stages?

2 How should the rules and structures be designed to help encourage these behaviours?

Your programme objectives should describe the planned purpose and expected results. Whatever programme structure is best suited to your club's/code's circumstances, it is possible to have programmes that are more competitive but also focus on skill development, which may mean less travel, shorter seasons or more game orientation so participants only have to devote two or three days a week. Similarly, elite activities can also emphasise ethical behaviour, respect for opponents and positive lifelong habits.

Below are some examples of good practice programme objectives:

- Encourage participation in target groups and maintain the aim of {physical activity} for a game which is suitable for all shapes and sizes
- Deliver a programme which results in higher levels of individual involvement
- Deliver a programme which is matched to the participants' psychological and physiological development
- Develop a programme which supports talent development through key skills of hand-eye coordination, decision-making, etc.
- Develop a programme that provides a level of involvement and activity intensity that will support health and wellbeing.

TAKING A PARTICIPANT-LED APPROACH

A key to designing a solution to a challenge is to get close to the issue and work with the people we are trying to help. This is participant-led design.

We do not need to have the answers and we must not make assumptions about what may or may not work best. What we need is to facilitate the right environment to support the people involved in formulating and developing a solution that will work for them in their community.

Experience shows that when people are asked to co-design a programme, they are more likely to buy into, own, commit to and enjoy the activity. If this is achieved, it is more likely that it can be sustained, and outcomes will be long lasting or become embedded as a culture or even a habit. Continued engagement throughout the design and implementation stages of a programme is important to ensure the needs of the participant continue to be met.

Below is an overview for how to involve participants in the co-designing process:

- Establish target group(s) of people to consult
- Create a safe and relaxed environment where everyone can contribute
- Set clear goals about the session(s) purpose and what you, as the deliverer, would like to achieve and what the participants would like to achieve
- Offer various ways for people to make suggestions (verbally or written)
- Ask questions to identify what the participants want and determine any potential challenges or barriers
- Provide options and examples, not just open-ended questions, especially if it is a struggle to create good conversation
- Allow conversations to develop naturally and organically as much as possible.

Everyone should have a say. Ensure you are actively listening to responses and continually check, challenge and clarify to ensure what the participants are saying has been understood and noted. If the group produces several ideas, ask them to rank them in terms of importance to help decide where to focus first.

Below are some questions that could be asked:
- Why have you come along today?
- What is your desired outcome?
- What are your passions?
- If you had your choice, what programme would you create?
- What would a good programme look like to you?
- What do you enjoy about being physically active?
- What don't you enjoy about physical activity?
- What is exciting to you about this opportunity?

- What do you do now to feel healthy and happy?
- What does fun look like to you?
- Tell me about a time when you participated in a physical activity with your friends/family. What did you enjoy about it?
- Is there anywhere in your local community that you have never been but would like to go?
- What support would you need to participate in the activity and what do you consider to be issues and barriers?
- How do you think issues and barriers could be addressed?
- What days and times work best for you to participate in your chosen activity?
- Which location would be most suitable?

It is important to understand that participant-led design can be time-consuming, and several sessions may be required to design a suitable programme.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURES

There are three main types of programme structure that might attract or push people away from your club/code.

Blended programmes	Targeted programmes	Tiered programmes (combination of blended and targeted)
A variety of options as part of an overall programme. **For example (basketball):** • Pickup times • Recreational/competitive leagues • Coaching/training sessions • Different formats (e.g. 3 on 3). The benefit of this programme structure is that it offers a variety for a large population to meet the needs of different people. The challenges are ensuring quality (due to so much activity), scheduling to meet people's needs and the costs associated with running it.	Focuses on a limited type or number of options. **For example (bowls):** • Elite league only with x teams for each grade. The benefit of this programme structure is fewer demands (i.e. people, cost) placed on the organisation, therefore easier to ensure quality. The challenge is that it only caters to a narrow range of participants and limits the number of people involved.	People can choose to join a variety of activities at multiple levels with a view to progress from one stage to the next. **For example (skate):** • Learn to skate (5x weeks with equipment provided) • Recreational and drop-in opportunities for those who did the learn to skate option • Coaching/training sessions • Competitive leagues and representative opportunities.

REMEMBER:
RATHER THAN TRY TO MAKE YOUR PARTICIPANTS FIT THE PROGRAMME YOU WANT TO DELIVER, TRY TO OFFER A PROGRAMME THAT YOUR PARTICIPANTS WANT TO TAKE PART IN.

For example, the NZ Rugby Participation Framework:

FUTURE RUGBY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK
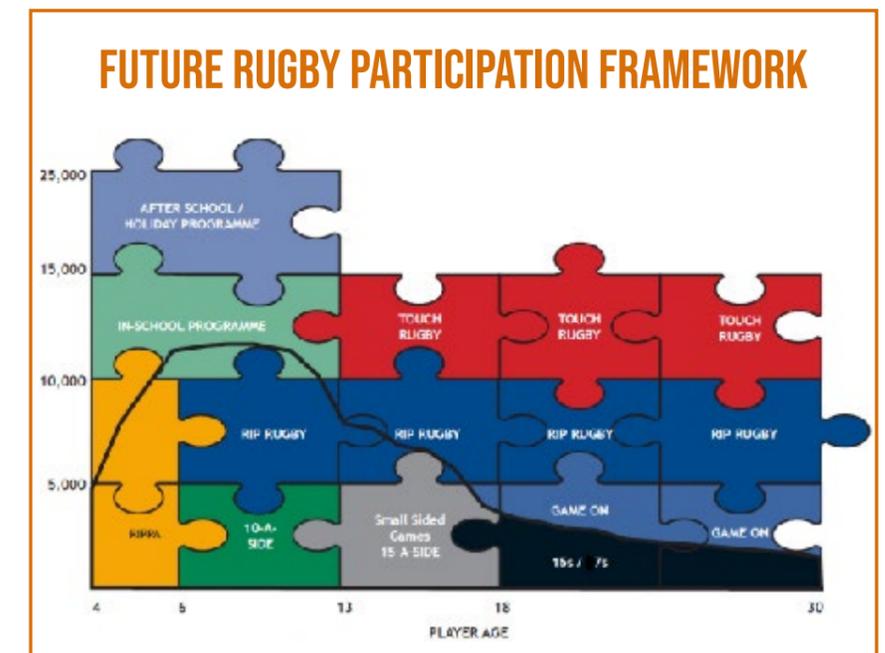
NZ Rugby, Future Rugby Participation Framework (2019).

DESIGNING PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Good programme design begins with good **planning >>** . There are six basic programme elements that you can modify to meet the needs of your participants:

Purpose – this is what you want to achieve. It may include having fun, developing skills, enhancing character, improving fitness or developing decision making.

THE PURPOSE OF YOUR PROGRAMME SHOULD FOCUS ON MEETING ALL FOUR NEEDS (PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL, COGNITIVE AND SPIRITUAL) TO ENSURE THE PHYSICAL LITERACY APPROACH >> IS BEING MET FOR EACH OF YOUR PARTICIPANTS.

Players – this is how many people are involved and the makeup of groups.

Movements – this covers how players are to move (areas, direction) and the relationship with the objects.

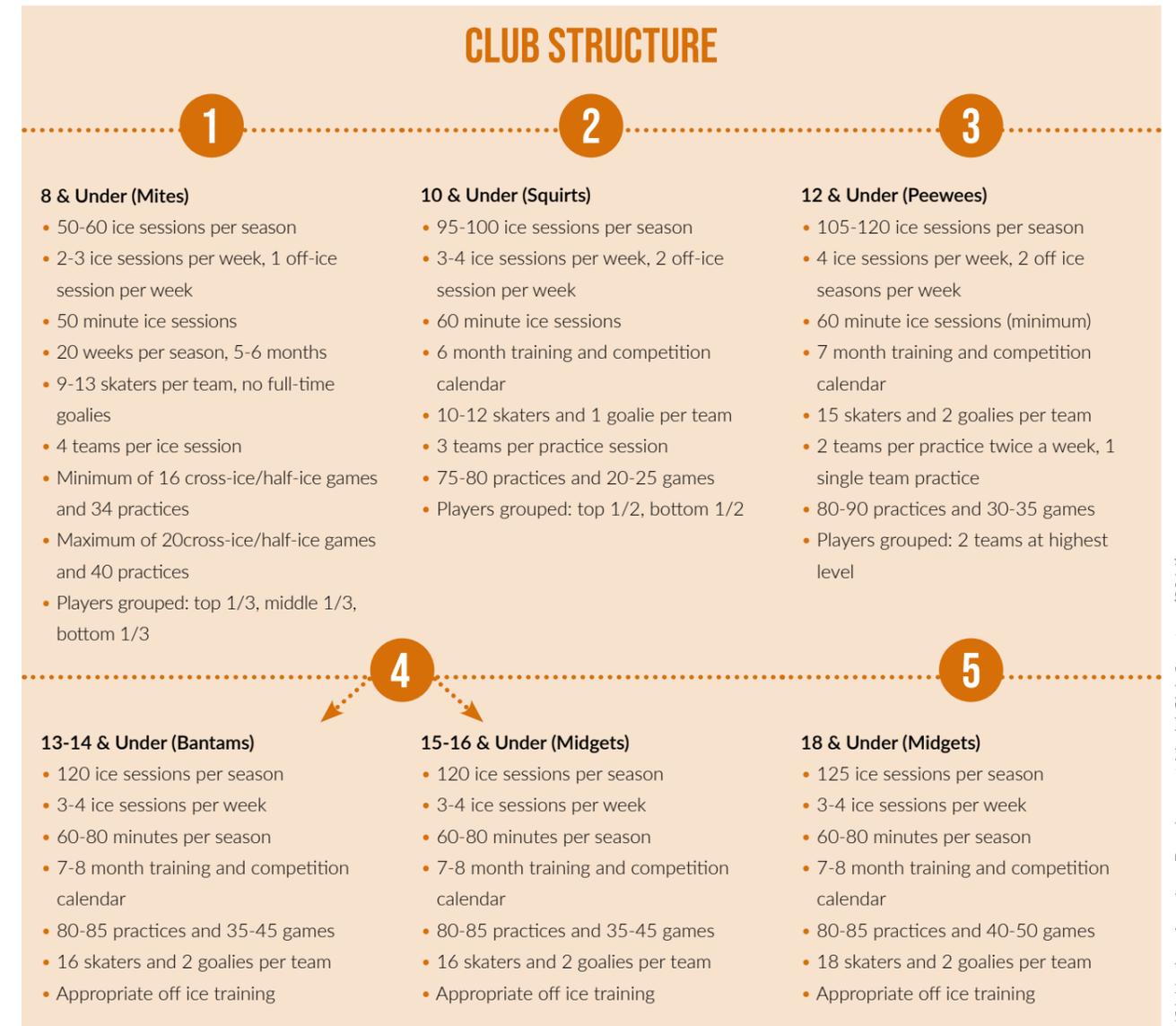**Objects –** this is the equipment that the game requires.

Organisation – this is the space required, where players can go and how many.

Limits/Rules – these laws indicate the boundaries, time limits and scoring conditions.

This is where a tiered (graded/scaffolded) programme design works well. See below for an example (ice hockey).

CLUB STRUCTURE

1

8 & Under (Mites)
- 50-60 ice sessions per season
- 2-3 ice sessions per week, 1 off-ice session per week
- 50 minute ice sessions
- 20 weeks per season, 5-6 months
- 9-13 skaters per team, no full-time goalies
- 4 teams per ice session
- Minimum of 16 cross-ice/half-ice games and 34 practices
- Maximum of 20 cross-ice/half-ice games and 40 practices
- Players grouped: top 1/3, middle 1/3, bottom 1/3

2

10 & Under (Squirts)
- 95-100 ice sessions per season
- 3-4 ice sessions per week, 2 off-ice session per week
- 60 minute ice sessions
- 6 month training and competition calendar
- 10-12 skaters and 1 goalie per team
- 3 teams per practice session
- 75-80 practices and 20-25 games
- Players grouped: top 1/2, bottom 1/2

3

12 & Under (Peewees)
- 105-120 ice sessions per season
- 4 ice sessions per week, 2 off ice seasons per week
- 60 minute ice sessions (minimum)
- 7 month training and competition calendar
- 15 skaters and 2 goalies per team
- 2 teams per practice twice a week, 1 single team practice
- 80-90 practices and 30-35 games
- Players grouped: 2 teams at highest level

4

13-14 & Under (Bantams)
- 120 ice sessions per season
- 3-4 ice sessions per week
- 60-80 minutes per season
- 7-8 month training and competition calendar
- 80-85 practices and 35-45 games
- 16 skaters and 2 goalies per team
- Appropriate off ice training

15-16 & Under (Midgets)
- 120 ice sessions per season
- 3-4 ice sessions per week
- 60-80 minutes per season
- 7-8 month training and competition calendar
- 80-85 practices and 35-45 games
- 16 skaters and 2 goalies per team
- Appropriate off ice training

5

18 & Under (Midgets)
- 125 ice sessions per season
- 3-4 ice sessions per week
- 60-80 minutes per season
- 7-8 month training and competition calendar
- 80-85 practices and 40-50 games
- 18 skaters and 2 goalies per team
- Appropriate off ice training

USA Hockey, American Development Model Club Structure (2016)

Consider these design principles when coming up with your activities:
- Provide a range of fun and engaging activities for skill learning
- Provide maximum use of time, facilities and equipment
- Ensure skills have progression from simple to complex
- Provide a safe, successful and non-threatening **environment >>**
- Allow participants to progress at their own pace
- Regardless of format and modifications, safety should always be top priority.

Below are some resources that your club/code may find useful to design fun programme activities:
- **Kiwidex Manual >>**
- **Fundamental Movement Skills >>**
- **Transforming character strengths into proactive results >>**
- **Sport New Zealand Play Principles >>**

SCHEDULING ACTIVITIES

Once you have an idea of the programme and activities your club/code will offer, the next step is to schedule each opportunity for your participants.

Below are some factors to consider when putting together your programme timetable.

Type of programme – is it something that your community want?

Past/current participation – how popular has the programme been before?

Maximum capacity – how many people can fit (safely) within the space you have available?

Available equipment – is your programme limited by the amount of equipment you have?

People – how many people do you need and what skills/knowledge will they need to deliver the programme?

Timing – what time of day suits people? When do you have access to the playing area?

Duration – how many weeks can people commit to?

Season – how does your event/tournament calendar affect people's availability?

Marketing – what will you do to promote your programme? **More information on marketing >>**

Maintenance – what setup, pack down and cleaning needs to be considered? **More on facility management >>**

Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all formula to creating the perfect programme schedule. This will (and should) vary within and between clubs/codes to meet the needs of the community.

Whatever your schedule looks like, keeping accurate participation data will be helpful for your club/code to understand people's habits. This will allow you to regularly improve your programmes and offerings over time.

ADDING CHALLENGES

Within your programmes, you should try and provide challenges where appropriate. There are three ways you could do this:

IN CLUB CONTESTS
These can be fun skill/fitness activities that encourage your members to do the best they can. For example: as many shots in a minute, as many pushups as possible

ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES
These could be approaches like whoever visits the club/facility the most during the month wins a prize, or everyone who attends x times during the season goes in the draw to win a free membership

COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS
These are a great way to give your members the chance to test themselves and others and to put what they have learned into practice.

Finding the right level and type of challenge usually triggers a response of wanting to do well. This can help enhance development provided the challenge is within current capability. Note, some challenges can have the opposite effect and can slow development if the challenge is too difficult or too easy.

SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS
- Link challenges to big events (such as World Cups)
- Make sure the challenges appeal to a reasonable proportion of your members
- Have different categories with their own winners and prizes
- Recognise everyone who takes part (no losers)
- Ensure the joining process is simple
- Get your staff and volunteers involved
- Share details through your marketing and communication channels.

COMPETITION FORMATS

Competitions/tournaments allow those who wish to test themselves with opportunities to play to the highest level that their ability will allow. Like structuring a programme, tournaments can also be structured to align with the programme purpose.

Below are some popular tournament formats:

ROUND-ROBIN TOURNAMENTS

The most popular format, this allows for maximum participation because each entry plays against other entries an equal number of times. The winner is usually determined by a win-loss percentage.

SINGLE ELIMINATION TOURNAMENTS

All entries compete in the first round but only the winners compete in the following rounds until the winner is found.

CONSOLATION TOURNAMENTS

All entries compete in the first round and those who lose start another single elimination tournament.

LADDERS

List entries in a vertical list and those who win move up a spot. Winner determined when the ladder is stopped.

MEETS

Two or more entries organise separate events against each other.

Participation in tournaments can be fun and promote social interaction, while others can stress winning at all costs. Check back to these two key questions when determining how to link tournaments with your programme structure:

- What behaviours should be emphasised at the various age group levels?
- How should the rules and structures be designed to help encourage these behaviours?

For example, the NZ Cricket Junior programme and tournament formats:

NZ Cricket, ANZ Junior Game Showcase (2018)

EVALUATING AND MODIFYING PROGRAMMES

Evaluating your programmes will allow you to find out what your participants like and don't like, if your programme achieved its purpose, met outcomes and how many people took part so you can better plan for future programmes and make necessary changes. It also provides you with information that you can share with funders and your members.

THINK OF PROGRAMMING AS AN ONGOING PROCESS AND EVERY CYCLE SHOULD SEE SOME CHANGE OR MODIFICATION.

There are different methods you can evaluate your programmes by:
- Observe participants (remember to write notes on your observations so you have a written record)
- Record informal comments and complaints
- Have feedback forms for people to complete
- Have casual interviews with participants throughout the programme
- Hand out a questionnaire, survey or evaluation form at the programme's conclusion
- Hold a debrief meeting with your staff and volunteers
- Take photographs
- Keep a video diary.

Evaluations can also be done at different points in time using different methods. For example:

BEFORE: In the weeks leading up to the start of the programme provide some taster sessions, analyse how many attend and ask for suggestions.

DURING: After each session ask players to give feedback on how things went. Get coaches/instructors to reflect on each session by logging what improvements could be made.

AFTER: Survey your players, parents, observers, etc. to find out what they thought.

USEFUL REMINDERS

By providing opportunities to engage you can create feelings of connectedness and fun which ignite the spark for participation. The following serve as useful reminders when designing and delivering any programme.

PUT YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE FIRST

- Recognise that your target audience are experts in their own needs. Better outcomes result when you co-design opportunities alongside them and continue to check that their needs are being met
- Build whanaungatanga (close relationships) with your audience and provide safe spaces before asking them to share their ideas and participate. It is equally important to recognise that this takes time.

BE AGILE AND PREPARED TO CHANGE

- It is important to listen, be agile and quick to respond
- Due to the fast-paced, ever-changing world we live in, be prepared to adapt and build on insights from feedback and evaluation forms.

BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

- Build meaningful connections with a network of other like-minded organisations to support better outcomes and sustainability
- A wide range of influences affect wellbeing or prevent participation at different times in a person's life
- Recognise these influences and be holistic in your approach.

PEOPLE POWER

- Find the right people to engage your target audience and create a safe space
- Empower people because they are the role models for and connectors with your target audiences.

LOOKING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

There is a range of resources available to assist with the running of your club/code.

HERE TO HELP

Your Regional Sports Trust/Organisations are also here to help – please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to talk through any of this material and/or assistance for your club and/or code.

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING:

aktive.org.nz >>
clmnz.co.nz/clm-community-sport >>
harboursport.co.nz >>
sportauckland.co.nz >>
sportwaitakere.co.nz >>

Information in this toolkit is for guidance only and does not constitute formal professional advice. Where specific issues arise in your club/code, advice should be sought from the relevant expert(s) as necessary.

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