

NukuOra
An active Wellington region

NAVIGATE THE PRE-SEASON ENVIRONMENT

A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL SPORT ADMINISTRATORS



WHY A FOCUS ON THE PRE-SEASON ENVIRONMENT?

Navigating the various considerations and demands of athletes, coaches, and sports committees, clubs, and parents when overseeing the pre-season programme for winter and Summer sports codes are one of the trickiest parts of a sports coordinator's or director's role.

This guide aims to empower you with the confidence and tools to work through the situations that can arise.

In keeping with Balance is Better principles, the key consideration should always be “What is in the best interests of the participant?”

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Look at each area of consideration to reflect on how your current school programme is set up to meet the requirements of a pre-season across the sports that you offer and if there are any gaps in your approach that you can focus on as a priority.
- Look at the questions that are posed for each area and reflect on what your response would be. Think about ways you can ensure the stakeholders in your programme (athletes, coaches, parents) are on the same page e.g., understanding how trials and selections will be run for each sport.
- Check out the Balance is Better website (<https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/>) for articles and guides to help you. There is a specific section for Sports Leaders and Administrators as well as specific sections for the philosophies relevant to this topic of pre-season:
 - ***Safe, Fair, and Inclusive***
 - ***Quality Experiences regardless of ability or motivations***
 - ***Skill Development for all***
 - ***Balance getting better with doing too much***
- If you require any assistance with navigating this document or help in implementing your approach, please contact the Community Development team at Nuku Ora.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FROM A PRE-SEASON?

“All sports require a pre-season training window of some description before competition starts and this should be factored into scheduling to help prevent injury.

However, care should be taken to limit the impact of this period on player workload, and to allow participants’ core season commitments in one sport to take priority over pre-season training in another sport should the participant so wish (participant choice rather than compulsion)”

Sport New Zealand Balance is Better National Sport Season Transition Guidelines – May 2020

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION?

The image consists of six horizontal banners stacked vertically, each with a different background and text. The top banner is dark green with white text and a circular logo on the right. The second banner is grey with white text and a hand holding a smartphone. The third banner shows a group of athletes on a court. The fourth banner shows a soccer field with orange cones. The fifth banner is dark blue with white text and a list of sports. The bottom banner shows a person in a white shirt and dark vest.

- SCHOOL SPORT PHILOSOPHY/POLICIES** (Logo: WAIKAPAPA UNIVERSITY OF SPORTS, THE ONSLOW WAY)
- FOMO** (Fear Of Missing Out) (#FOMO YEAR OF MISSING OUT)
- TRIALS**
- PRE-SEASON CONTENT/LENGTH**
- PRE-SEASON TOURNAMENTS/LEAGUES** (Wairarapa College Sports Foundation, 2023 PRE-SEASON WINTER TOURNAMENT, BOYS HOCKEY FOOTBALL BASKETBALL, GIRLS HOCKEY FOOTBALL NETBALL)
- ATHLETES MANAGING MULTIPLE SPORTS**

SCHOOL SPORT PHILOSOPHY/POLICIES



FOMO
(Fear Of Missing Out)



What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does school department have support of Senior Leadership Team? How does school approach sports programme Traditional structures in place – pre-season tournaments etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the school have values and a charter (or outline) of what the school aims to achieve through providing sport? Does school have trial/ selection policy. 	<p>Outline the expectations in this so that parents, players, coaches know what to expect e.g. our school does not participate in x, y, z tournaments because they are pre-season and we think it is more important to give the athletes a break.</p> <p>OR, if we enter pre-season tournaments, we will not start training in earnest prior to then as they are just part of our build-up process.</p>
Further information	https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/setting-coaches-up-for-success-a-guide-for-sport-leaders-administrators/	

What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
Assumption that another school starting earlier with trials/training is ahead of the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they have a point? What is rationale behind other schools approach? How do those teams go during the season (Do they get many injuries, do they perform well at the end of the season?) Which athletes are involved (are they the ones not playing another sport) 	<p>Having the ability to confidently communicate how you wish to approach the upcoming year as regards to pre-season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent communication Player communication Coach communication <p>This could include guidance on what a good pre-season looks like.</p>
Further information	https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/creating-a-positive-parent-culture-a-guide-for-schools-and-clubs/	



What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
Trial Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do trials clash with other sports seasons/school camps? Have they been set too early for Y9's? (Have they had time to get settled in?) Does the trial date allow adequate time for athletes to physically prepare? A spike in physical loading (i.e., returning from a lazy summer holiday and going straight into trials) is a big injury risk for athletes as their bodies may not be able to cope. 	<p>Set up 'Have a Go' days leading into trials so athletes become more comfortable with environment.</p> <p>Set trial dates beyond the previous season where possible – Take control of the bookings and advise coaches of when they take place.</p> <p>Provide coaches/committees with overall sports calendar to show them impact of trial dates.</p>
Trial Requirements	What are school coaches' expectations regarding trial attendance when there is a clash with an existing sports commitment?	<p>Do existing commitments take priority?</p> <p>Survey athletes to find out what their current commitments are.</p>
Further information	<p>https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/a-guide-to-running-good-trials-and-selection-processes/</p> <p>https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/webinar-replay-trials-and-selection-processes-in-youth-sport-what-does-good-look-like/</p>	



What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
<p>Age and stage of athlete/s (are they playing junior/senior sport? Are they playing socially or aiming for the top team?)</p> <p>What safety requirements need to be met for an athlete to play sport safely e.g., a certain competence (rowing) or safety (contact in rugby)?</p> <p>What is the coaching knowledge around pre-season quality – periodisation, training load?</p>	<p>What does the pre-season consist of (testing – why and what, physical conditioning, intensity)? Is it just team bonding so no physical impact on other sports involvements?</p> <p>Who has oversight of what it contains at Junior A and Senior 1st XI Level? (is there a difference?)</p> <p>Is the pre-season length safe?</p> <p>How are Y9/Y10 included in senior programmes (can they cope)?</p> <p>What background/experience does the coach have in pre-season training?</p> <p>Does the coach know what athletes are already doing (i.e. some aren't starting from scratch so do they need the same pre-season as everyone else?)</p>	<p>Gain understanding of what a 'good' pre-season looks like relevant to:</p> <p>Age and stage of athlete/s (are they playing junior/senior sport? Are they playing socially or aiming for top team?)</p> <p>Find out if relevant testing is already being done via PE Classes.</p> <p>Advice from ACC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradually increase training intensity and contact training Spend time working on core strength and balance. Practise sport-specific movements you will need to use in a game. Use the ACC SportSmart warm up at least twice a week.
Further information	<p>https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/creating-a-positive-parent-culture-a-guide-for-schools-and-clubs/</p>	

PRE-SEASON TOURNAMENTS/ LEAGUES

Wairarapa College Sports Foundation

2023 PRE-SEASON WINTER TOURNAMENT

BOYS
HOCKEY
FOOTBALL
BASKETBALL



GIRLS
HOCKEY
FOOTBALL
NETBALL
BASKETBALL



ATHLETES MANAGING MULTIPLE SPORTS



What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
What are the league/ tournament opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is the coach looking to enter? Is this something the school traditionally always enters? (what are consequences if they don't enter?) What does this do to the length of the season? Does this mean pre-season starts earlier to be ready for pre-season tournament? 	<p>Decide on importance/ relevance of these activities in relation to length of the season.</p> <p>Communicate school approach to pre-season tournaments to stakeholders (coaches, athletes, parents).</p>

What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
Completing multiple pre-seasons	<p>How many fitness sessions will the athlete be doing – are they compatible.</p> <p>Who are the adult stakeholders overseeing the athlete's involvement in these sports?</p>	<p>Initiate joined up conversations with all the adult stakeholders (parents, coaches, trainers, etc.) who are supporting an adolescent athlete that has a high training and competition load.</p> <p>Monitor the situation on a regular basis.</p>
<p>The crossover between seasons.</p> <p>Balance is Better aims to promote the opportunity for participants to experience a range of sports for as long as possible.</p> <p>A key factor in allowing this is avoiding clashes between winter and summer sports whenever possible.</p>	<p>Are the trainings/ trials going to clash or cause issues e.g. lifting weights on a Friday and impact on player taking part in competition on a Saturday.</p> <p>How will the workload be managed?</p> <p>E.G. Rugby wants players to bulk up vs Rowers needing them to be leaner.</p>	<p>In enrolment / membership processes, insert a standard question that solicits information from athletes about other sports/activities etc. Make sure to share this information with the athlete's coach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other sport/activities/ commitments? Hours per week training/ competing/doing Important dates/ windows to be aware of (e.g. key competitions/events/ tournaments).

What do you need to consider?	Question to ask	Actions you could take
		<p>For athletes that you think might be at risk of overload or overtraining due to participating in multiple sports at the same time / playing for multiple teams etc, initiate joint up conversations with respective coaches to establish strategies to support the said athlete's wellbeing. This could include tactics such as rest and rotation protocols, as well as decreasing expectations on attendance at training, or the intensity that an athlete trains.</p> <p>If you have athletes with multiple coaches, make sure that you connect with those coaches at the start of the season and again every one-to-two months to ensure all coaches have a collective idea on how various training and competition schedules will impact an individual athlete.</p>
Further information	https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/balance-getting-better-with-doing-too-much/ https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/how-do-i-support-an-athlete-with-a-variety-of-coaches/ https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/a-practical-guide-for-monitoring-athlete-training-and-competition-load/ https://www.acc.co.nz/assets/Newsroom-documents/your-fitness-time-sport-and-training-schedule.pdf	

APPENDIX

Balance is Better National Sport Season Transition Guidelines
<https://sportnz.org.nz/covid-19-response/advice-guidance-and-resources/sport-season-transition-guidelines-2020/>

Sport NZ sport season transition guidelines 2021
<https://sportnz.org.nz/covid-19-response/advice-guidance-and-resources/sport-season-transition-guidelines/>

Sport NZ Secondary Age Review 2019
<https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/secondary-age-review-2019/>

Setting Coaches up for success
<https://balanceisbetter.org.nz/setting-coaches-up-for-success-a-guide-for-sport-leaders-administrators/>