



## BHA Under 7 & Under 9 Hockey

### ***Recruitment and Retention – Serious Action Required!***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Under 7 and Under 9 age groups are the foundations that the remainder of our competitions are dependant upon. Inevitably lower numbers in the Under 7 and Under 9 age groups mean lower numbers in the coming years in the older age groups, a phenomenon that is already evident. Currently the Under 7 and Under 9 age groups are experiencing perhaps the leanest years in terms of numbers since their introduction as Minkey and Modified Hockey beginning in 1984.

An urgent but planned approach to address this is required. And above all, the seemingly endless talks and discussions that surround matters involving the Junior section of our game in this region, must give way to action. The focus of this action must be the Under 7 and Under 9 age groups, not the J's and whether my Club or your Club can fiddle with the competition in order to win a premiership. There won't be any 'J' premierships to win in a few years if we don't act now!

More than ever before there is an urgent need for concerned members of this Association and its Clubs to get directly involved in the *doing* and not just the talking. It will only be through action that we will turn this alarming situation around. We need to recruit at least twice as many players into the Under 7 and Under 9 age groups as the number we expect to have in the years to come in the J's.

The good news is that if real action is taken now, it won't take long for us to begin to see real growth in these very crucial age groups. The action required is a fully structured and coordinated approach and needs to be implemented uniformly across our region. It *must* involve *all* Clubs, it must be bipartisan and it must also involve Clubs that currently don't have Junior teams. The following outlines the approach that needs to be taken.

#### **THE PRODUCT**

First and foremost we need to develop our 'product'. We need to have a 'product' or 'template' that is consistent and has a clear and precise program at its core. Around this can be developed a marketable identity that can be used in promotional material and other events throughout the year and throughout the region. For example the 'product' can be actively promoted at Come & Try Days, After School Care, in-school activities, etc, as *the* follow on activity. (Refer to the BHA Recruitment Plan Flow Chart)

It is no longer acceptable that we simply invite players to participate in Under 7 and Under 9 competitions each year by way of a newspaper advert that just lists phone numbers. It's often been very difficult to advertise specifics as much of that is only finalised as the Season approaches or even after it has commenced. It is therefore essential that dates, times and venues are set not only well before season start but also in time for advertising and promotional campaigns.

Only with a fully developed product that includes a network of Under 7 and Under 9 Centres, agreed dates, times and venues, can we provide realistic information in advertising and promotional material for initiatives and events that we undertake. This in turn provides potential players and their parents with a much easier and informed decision making process. The nett result of this is that we are much more likely to succeed at attracting players (and parents) to the game.

The following sections clarify what needs to be done, firstly by describing the initiative in general terms, followed by a more in depth explanation of the implementation. This is then followed by several further pages of attachments which clarify specific aspects in even more detail.

## GENERAL OUTLINE

In developing the 'product' it was identified that we need to:

- take our Under 7 and Under 9 competitions out to the suburbs and not centralise them to just one or two venues. Refer to Attachments 2 & 6 for details of venues;
- convince members and officials that the Under 7 and Under 9 age groups *must* be targeted and that with some determined effort it is possible to get enough numbers to host Centres;
- create a product that is visible, accessible and appealing to both children and parents;
- develop an initial set of Centres on both sides of the river, followed by more as we move on to develop the product and increase recruitment (Attachment 6);
- initially engage more than one Club at each Centre wherever possible, and ultimately over time, engage each Club at more than one Centre;
- encourage bipartisan relationships within the Association when developing and managing Centres for these age groups, it's about the future our sport and not just individual Clubs;
- consider the use of alternatives to Club shirts for Under 7's so as to add to the fun and appeal of our game, there is plenty of time in coming years for children to identify with Club colours; could be rolled out to Under 9 as well (see Attachment 3);
- consider shortening the 'season' length for each Under 7 and Under 9 comp with a view to running more than one per calendar year, perhaps as many as four (Attachments 1 & 4);
- make the Under 7 and Under 9 recruitment product the responsibility of a Director on the BHA Board of Management;
- investigate the appointment of individuals as 'Centre Supervisors' to be responsible for the ongoing management of each Centre;
- sign up and register officials and 'workers', not just players and parent;
- consider providing each Centre with a budgeted amount of funding in keeping with the amount collected from the Under 7 and Under 9 player fees;
- provide funding for the initial purchase of nets, markers, balls, spare sticks, etc, and optionally fund shade tents, tea and coffee for the parents;
- develop a consistent set of rules and equipment across all Centres for aspects of the game such as: field sizes, net sizes and types, umpiring arrangements, on field coaches, match length, wet weather arrangements, to name but a few;
- understand that we must 'hook' *both* the players *and* the parents into this age group in order that they will be more likely to continue in the following years in the older age groups;
- attempt to make the whole exercise enjoyable and rewarding for the officials and 'workers';
- insist that *all* Clubs be involved, including those currently without Junior teams;
- make the outcome beneficial to all, i.e. the Clubs, the Association and the Game at large.

None of this is 'rocket science', and none of the individual requirements are particularly new. Perhaps the difference with this initiative is the requirement for to put this all together as a standardised and marketable product. And we must *sell* our product to the players and their parents, even if it does mean a bit of pampering and going out of our way. It will be worth it in the long run. Many of the above points require further explanation and clarification, so please read on . . .

## IMPLEMENTATION

**Name:** BHA Rookey Hockey

**Seasons:** Run 4 by **10 week Seasons** in conjunction with the school terms (see Attachments 1 & 4)

**Dates:** In line with the school calendar (see attachment 4)

**Day and Time:** **Friday at 5.30pm is seen as ideal** – other days and times also possible

**Draw:**

1. Draw will be set according to the number of teams
2. U7's 15min's warm up games (Skill Based) 20min half's 5 min half time  
U9's 15min's warm up games (Skill Based) 20min half's 5 min half time  
The 7's & 9's 15min skills based warm up to be run by QUT and University players
3. A Carnival Day (2-3 hours) at the end of each season (10<sup>th</sup> week) to be played on a Saturday morning with teams from another Centre

**Cost per Player:** BHA levy to be determined by Treasurer and Board (Clubs may add on more?)

**Equipment:**

1. Nets; Purchase fold out nets or look at making roll-up goal boxes that are easy to carry and store (see Attachment 6)
2. Balls to be provided by the clubs
3. Markers to be provided by BHA
4. First Aid Kit to be provided by BHA
5. Hockey Sticks (spares) to be provided by BHA
6. Shirts for players (sourced by BHA – Attachment 3)

**Competition Rules:**

1. Field sizes: U7's  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a field; U9's  $\frac{1}{2}$  field; revisit field sizes after Season 2 (Attachment 5)
2. Number of players: U7's, 6 per side and U9's, 7 per side (for variations see Attachment 1)
3. No corner for U7's but will have a free hit on the 10 meter line; U9's will have corner's
4. No tomahawks for U7's and U9's
5. FIH normal rules for 9's
6. Minkey rules for 7's - Kim Rendell has copies
7. No self hit rule for 7's
8. One paid umpire for each game (U11 or U13 Players)

### **Venues, South Side (Attachment 6)**

1. State Hockey Centre ( Bulimba and Easts Hockey Clubs)
2. Mansfield (South Brisbane Eagles, Easts and Logan Hockey Clubs)
3. Graceville ( South West United Hockey Clubs)

### **Venues, North Side (Attachment 6)**

1. Shaw Park ( Valley and Kedron Wavell Services Hockey Clubs)
2. Dorrington Park (Commercials and Norths Hockey Clubs)
3. Pine Hills (Pine Hills and Pine Rivers Saint Andrews Hockey Clubs)
4. Redcliffe ( Redcliffe Hockey Club)

### **BHA Budget:**

A budget needs to be developed for this initiative. The BHA Treasurer will assist in determining realistic costings and the creation of a formal Budget. Items that will require costing for each Centre include:

1. There will be one Umpire per match and they will be paid \$8.00 per match. Each team will be required to provide a volunteer on-field coach, i.e. umpiring and coaching are separated
2. Centre Coordinator: Paid for 2 - 3 hours, depending on format used
3. Goal Nets – variations exist – pre-made or could use cheaper method. (see Attachment 6)
4. Field cost: Ideally no charges
5. First Aid
6. Spare Hockey Sticks
7. Cheap T-Shirts for player in U7's (see Attachment 3)
8. Umpires and Coordinator shirts
9. Advertising (Newspapers, Websites)

### **Clubs:**

1. Personnel (Working roster)
2. Equipment (balls, markers)
3. Ground Facility (Toilet, Lights field markings) see attached field sizes
4. BBQ, Food and Drinks
5. Clubs to budget for these expenses

### **LET'S DO IT**

Both your Club's and your Association's future survival depends on the implementation of this initiative. It is no longer enough that such matters are discussed over and over. It's time for action!

This paper has been produced by Kim Rendell (BHA General Secretary), Mick Evans (BHA Regional Coaching Director) and Sam Brooks (BHA Hockey Development Officer) primarily for benefit of BHA and it's Clubs.

### SEASON LENGTH

There are several options here. The obvious option is to keep it as it is, i.e. following a similar time frame to that of the older age groups. However, many players and parents show signs of 'fatigue' by the end of the 20 to 25 weeks (including non-playing weekends) we currently play in an Under 7 and Under 9 season. And when a Centre only has four teams in a competition then the teams are playing each other every three weeks which can also become rather tedious.

Another option is to have multiple, shorter seasons throughout the year. That is, shorten the competitions and then schedule several throughout the year, either consecutively, overlapping or a combination of both. What is important is that we identify just what it is that will prove to be the most attractive to players and parents.

The following outlines a way to set up such competitions based on school terms.

- divide the year into two, three or even four separate 'seasons', similar to school 'terms', with individual Centres not necessarily operating in all 'seasons';
- each 'season' would consist of 10 (or 11) weeks, avoiding school holidays (Attachment 4);
- children and parents could choose to register in one or more 'seasons', their choice;
- where possible, each 'season' would culminate in a 'carnival' morning where the teams of another competition or nearby Centre are invited to play against each other.

No of Teams	Total No of Weeks	No of Rounds	Matches per Round	No of Match Days	No of Carnival Days
4	10	3	3	9	1
6	10	2	5	10	0
6	11	2	5	10	1
8	Split into two by four team competitions. Perhaps play the carnival between the two competitions.				
10	Split into a four team and a six team competition. Carnival/s as above.				
12	Split into three by four or two by six team competitions. Carnival/s as above.				

### PLAYER NUMBERS

All competitions need to be made up of an even number of teams, i.e. there should be no byes. To achieve this there will sometimes be a need to be flexible with the numbers of players per team on the field compared to what is specified in the rules. The following table seeks to demonstrate how varying numbers might be handled in *some* likely scenarios:

Total No of Players	No of Teams	Players per Team		Total No of Players	No of Teams	Players per Team
26	4	6 & 7		39	6	6 & 7
24	4	6		36	6	6
22	4	5 & 6		33	6	5 & 6
20	4	5		30	6	5

In reality teams will need to carry more than the minimums shown here to allow for the inevitable player absences. The point to be taken from this is simply that on any given day there needs to be some flexibility in order to provide all players with reasonable time on the field.

**EXISTING VENUES**

Here is a list of locations based on Club grass venues as they currently exist. These can be considered as possible Under 7 & Under 9 Centres.

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Operator/Club</b>	<b>Comments</b>
SHC Colmslie	HQ	No charge for U7 & U9; clashes with school hockey (paying customers); convenient for some parents when older siblings are playing there in higher age groups
Shaw Park Kalinga	Valley HC	Plenty of room; fields still recovering from floods; good exposure to passing traffic; convenient for some parents when older siblings are playing there in higher age groups
Rasey Park Herston	BWHA	Already crowded; convenient for some parents when older siblings are playing in higher age groups at Downey Park
FR Caterson Park Mansfield	Mt Gravatt Youth & Rec Club (SBE HC)	Convenient as next to the crossroad of two major arterial roads; good exposure to passing traffic; SBE HC has already expressed interest in hosting an U7 & U9 Centre in 2010
Finsbury Park Newmarket	Commercial HC	Already has a full program; convenient for some parents when older siblings are playing in higher age groups at Downey Park
Graceville Memorial Oval	SWU HC	Convenient, on a major arterial road; good exposure; SWU HC has expressed interest in hosting an U7 & U9 Centre in 2010
Dorrington Park Ashgrove	Norths HC	Plenty of room; not on a major road though fairly strategically placed and convenient for north-western suburbs
O'Grady Park Fairfield	RL Referees Asn (Easts HC)	Assumes that East will maintain a presence there; good exposure to passing traffic; plenty of room provided no clashes with other sports
Mary Nairn Fields Redcliffe	Redcliffe LHC	Limited space on grass; good exposure to passing traffic; convenient for some parents when older siblings are playing on turf
South Pine Sports Complex Brendale	Pine Rivers St Andrews HC	May clash with other sports; convenient to many suburbs in a growing area; has potential
James Drysdale Reserve	Pine Hills HC	May clash with other sports; otherwise has potential; Pine Hills HC has expressed interest in hosting an U7 & U9 Centre in 2010
Meakin Park Slacks Creek	Logan HC	May clash with other sports; otherwise has potential; reasonable exposure
Burringbar Park Chermside	BHA/BWHA/K WS HC	Limited space on grass; convenient for some parents when older siblings are playing in higher age groups on turf
Carina Turf Carina	Easts HC	No grass; no other details at this time

**NEW VENUES**

When considering the location of new venues, for example Forrest Lake, Sandgate, Logan, etc, exposure to passing traffic should be included in the mix, as well as access from major arterial roads and other transport. Every little bit of exposure and convenience to parents is not only likely to assist parents in making their minds up it will further our cause.



**2010 SCHOOL TERMS & CALENDAR**

The following table has been copied and pasted directly from the Education Queensland Website.

<b>2010 (approved)</b>	
<b>School starts</b>	27/01/10
<b>Easter celebration</b>	Friday 2 to Monday 5 April 2010 (incl.)
<b>Autumn Vacation</b>	Tuesday 6 April to Sunday 11 April 2010 (incl.)
<b>Winter Vacation</b>	Saturday 26 June to Sunday 11 July 2010 (incl.)
<b>Spring Vacation</b>	Saturday 18 September to Sunday 3 October 2010 (incl.)
<b>Summer Vacation</b>	begins Saturday 11 December 2010
<b>Final day for Year 10 and 11 students</b>	26/11/10
<b>Final day for Year 12 students</b>	19/11/10
<b>Term length</b>	Term 1: 10 Weeks; Term 2: 11 Weeks; Term 3: 10 Weeks; Term 4: 10 Weeks

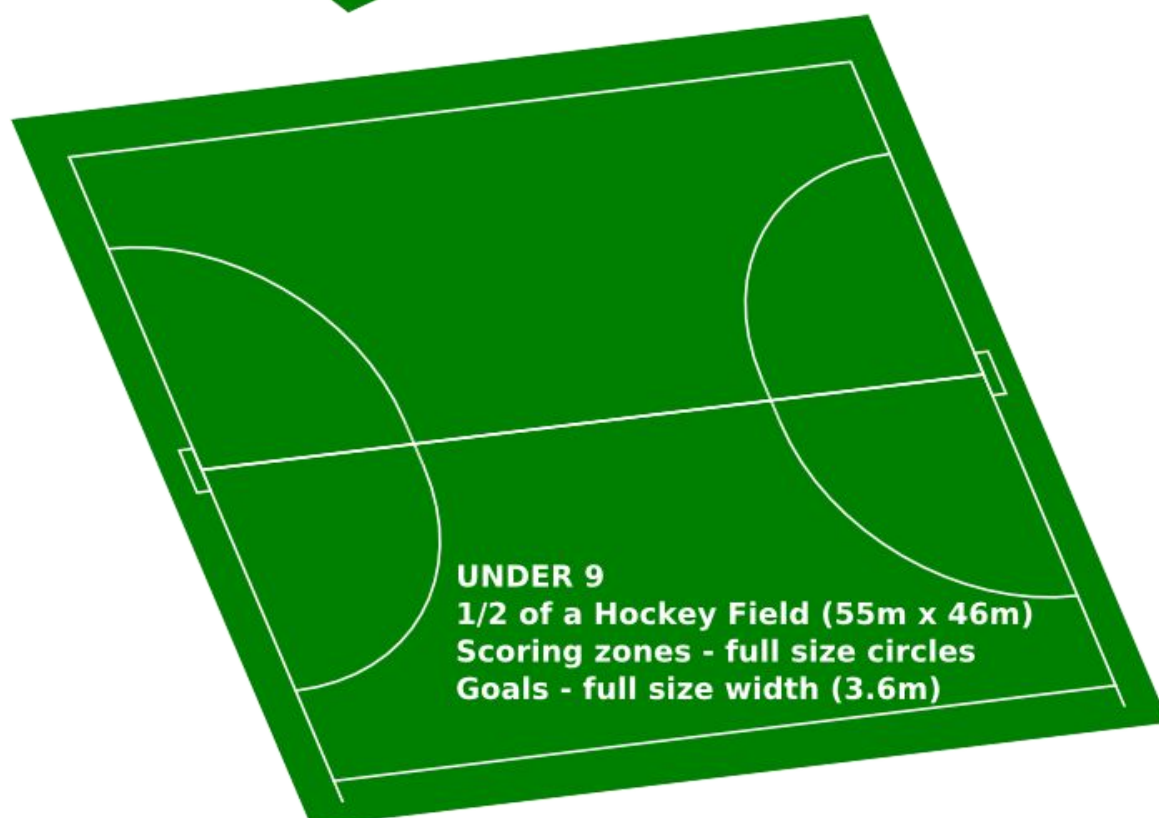
**2010**

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This Calendar shows 4 by 10 week Friday night 'seasons'. (shown in red or dark shading)

**FIELD SIZES**

The field sizes to be used are as per the original Minkey and Half-field (Modified) Hockey rules.



Small variations to sizes are acceptable in cases where there may be difficulty fitting the fields into a given area.

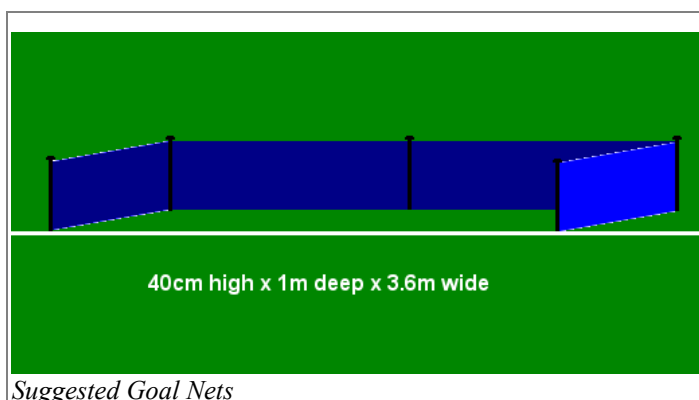
## GOAL NETS

There are many options here in terms of what form these might take, however *all* goals are to be full size in width, i.e. 3.6m wide. For these age groups it is all about having fun and scoring goals, lots of goals, *is* having fun. *Comment: How we ended up with goal nets of little more than a metre wide when the rules for both Minkey and Half-field (Modified) Hockey clearly call for full width goals is beyond me! Let's have more goals!!*

While there are many relatively convenient portable, fold-out and self assembly solutions available to purchase, unless you are prepared to spend a lot, none of them come close to being 3.6m wide. There is a far more economical, somewhat 'home-made' solution that needs to be investigated as soon as possible. This solution has been successfully used in other regions.

Each goal consists of approximately a six (6) metre length of 'ball trap' material (approximately 40cm wide) that has 'peg pockets' sewn onto it and five (5) or six (6) pegs. The 'ball trap' is then arranged as a squared 'U' shape with a 3.6 metre opening on the back-line. The pegs need to be made safe in case players fall onto them.

It would also be possible to carry sponsor and supporter advertising on these.

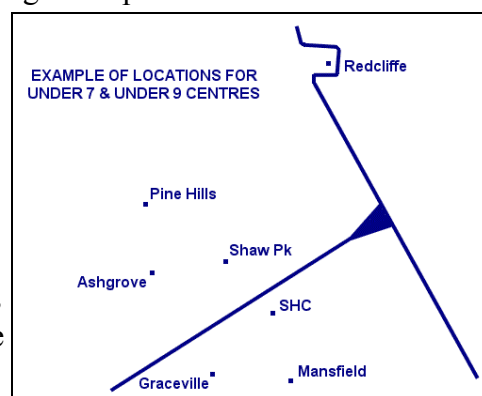


*Suggested Goal Nets*

## EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE LOCATIONS

It is important that we locate centres to cover as much of our region as possible. Refer to Attachment 2 for a full list of venue locations. As a starting point the suggestion is for an initial network of three (3) centres on the Southside, three (3) centres on the Northside and one (1) at Redcliffe.

The mud map shown here demonstrates this with examples of locations that would provide a good starting point and covering our region for the most part. After this, coverage could then be expanded to cover more Club venues as well as new venues over time. Of course the locations also need to be linked to recruitment levels in any given area.



**Please note:** At this point in time, the purpose of this map is to demonstrate the principle of spreading the Centres throughout the region. It is by no means set in concrete. However, Clubs associated with several of the sites shown on the map have already expressed an interest in hosting Under 7 and Under 9 competitions in 2010. All Clubs are welcome to consider hosting a Centre.