

No. 6

Starting up a Football (Soccer) Club

Tips on how to start your own sports club

Overview

The rules of sport are the same all over the world, but access to sport can be very different. In Australia, most sporting facilities are owned by local governments (councils). Understanding how to access these facilities is an important step to participating in sport.

This tip sheet includes information about how to go about starting your own football club and accessing sports facilities, including: Incorporating your club; Applying for and sharing a ground; Insurance; Costs; Registering with Football Federation Victoria; and, Useful contacts.

Why start your own club?

The system in Australia is set up so that regular users of sports fields, ovals and pavilions must belong to a sports club. The club must be a legal entity, which means it must be *incorporated*. To use a council-owned sports facility on a regular basis, council and clubs enter into a leasing agreement that details what the club's responsibilities are when using the facility. The running of the club is usually left to members who volunteer their time without payment.

Most sports have organised competitions that are played on a Saturday or Sunday. On one weekend a club may have several teams competing in a league. Games are sometimes played at the club's 'home ground' or at an opposition's ground. This means to participate players need to have access to transport.

When clubs are not using the sports grounds for their training or competition, councils encourage the local community to use outdoor space for free. However, due to legal and maintenance concerns, this type of use must be casual, which means that the group must not use the same reserve on a regular weekly basis.

Sports structures in Australia (Football)

Each sport has its own State Sporting Association (SSA). For example, Football Federation Victoria (FFV) is the SSA for football (soccer) in Victoria. State Sporting Associations govern the rules and regulations of the sport, organise the draw for the season, maintain the ladder of teams, and organise the finals.



VicHealth

HEALTH THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Sport – access for all cultures.

Tip Sheet from CMYI

Incorporating your club

As previously mentioned, any group that leases a ground from council must be a legal entity. This means the club needs to be *incorporated*. This can be done by contacting Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and filling in an *Application for Association Incorporation Form* and sending it in along with a cheque for the incorporation fee. This will be payable each year to keep your club registered.

However, filling in the form is the easy part! New clubs must also ensure that they have enough members to form a viable and robust organisation. You need to elect a committee which consists of a Public Officer, President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and two ordinary members.

The club must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year to elect or re-elect new members to the committee. The club also needs to produce an *Annual Statement of Income and Expenditure* every year. This must be lodged with CAV within one month of the AGM.

Clubs also need to adopt a *constitution*. This is a statement about the rules of your club, and includes things like the membership fees and other amounts (if any) to be paid by club members, how the funds of the club are to be managed and, in particular, who will be able to write and sign cheques on behalf of the incorporated association. The CAV has a model constitution which clubs can adopt (go to www.consumer.vic.gov.au). If you choose to write your own constitution then you need to lodge this with CAV along with your application.

You also need to open up a bank account for the club so you can deposit membership fees and pay the cost and expenses for the club.

You may also want to apply for an Australian Business Number (ABN). This will allow you to apply for funding from government. You can apply for an ABN (which is free) through the Australian Taxation Office or online at www.abr.gov.au

Applying to use a council ground

Each year councils receive hundreds of applications from clubs who apply for the use of council sports facilities. Even existing clubs need to re-apply to have their application considered. In the City of Maribyrnong, for example, ground applications need to be submitted by January. Council will then make a decision and notifies the successful clubs in February.

Decisions about ground allocation are based on a number of different factors. These include the number of club members, their financial viability, their inclusion of groups such as women, juniors and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) communities, and the sport they are representing.

In your application to council, you need to include your incorporation certificate, a financial statement, a copy of your public liability certificate (refer to the Insurance section below), a copy of the club's liquor license (if applicable), and a copy of the club's registration with a State Sporting Association (in this case, with Football Federation Victoria).

If your application is successful, council will also ask you to sign a *Conditions of Use* agreement.

Insurance

Council cannot allocate a ground to a club unless they have insurance. There are two ways you can get insurance. In some sports, if you register with the State Sporting Association you can get insurance through them, and this is calculated in your registration fees. The difficulty is that you can't get registration with Football Federation Victoria (FFV) unless you have a ground, and you can't get a ground unless you are registered with FFV. So the trick is to send in your application to council and your application to FFV at the same time.

Grounds and other club costs

Once council has allocated you a ground there are some expenses that you will have to pay as part of normal operations. Council will charge a fee for ground use. Some councils charge a flat fee (a standard amount per club), while others will charge per team. The cost per season can be between \$500 - \$1000 for a team.

As well as council costs, clubs also need to pay utility costs such as for water, electricity, gas or phone. For many football clubs, electricity is the highest cost as football is played in winter and clubs need lights to train during the week.

During the season, clubs need to pay for line marking and referees for games that are played at their home ground.

Some clubs will purchase uniforms and then distribute them to their players for the season. The uniforms remain the property of the club and are returned at the end of the season.

Usually the committee, coaches and other volunteers at the club will give their time without being paid.

Sharing a ground

Because of the high demands on council for sports facilities, most council's expect the grounds to be shared by more than one sporting club.

In the City of Maribyrnong, for example, Hansen Reserve has a Cricket Club which uses the ground during summer. In winter, the Reserve is used by a senior soccer club on Tuesday and Thursday nights and a junior soccer club on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights. Ground costs are shared proportionately by the different clubs.

How much money should club members pay?

As a club you can decide how much you charge your members, but you need to take all of the expenses outlined above into consideration when setting the fee.

(Note: Information above is based on the City of Maribyrnong, please check with your local council for more information about the cost of using council facilities.)

Registering with Football Federation Victoria (FFV)

Once your club has been allocated a ground you need to register your teams and players with Football Federation Victoria (FFV). You can do this by going to the FFV website (www.footballfedvic.com.au) and clicking on COMPETITION DOWNLOADS.

Here you will find a *Club/Committee Information Form* which will ask you for contact details of committee members, your home ground, team colours, when you train, etc.

You will also find Team Application forms, Competition Fees forms and Player Registration forms. These all need to be filled out and returned to FFV with payment by the due dates.



FFV Fees include:

Club account fees

This fee can range from \$115 - \$260 for Juniors, Womens, Thirds and Masters leagues. If you are a new club you will start at this level. Men's Premier League clubs can pay up to \$10,000.

Team entry fees

This fee can range from \$200 - \$240 per team.

Player registration fees

This fee can range from \$70 - \$200

A full list of fees can be downloaded from the FFV website or you can call the Competitions Co-ordinator at FFV on (03) 9474 1807.

Useful contacts

Consumer Affairs Victoria

Level 2, 452 Flinders Street
Melbourne
Phone: 1300 361 673
www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Football Federation Victoria

Phone: (03) 9474 1800
www.footballfed.vic.gov.au
info@footballfedvic.com.au

Australian Taxation Office

Phone: 13 28 66
www.ato.gov.au

Your local council

Contact details for local councils in Victoria can be found at www.mav.asn.au. Follow the link to 'Council Contacts'

Have fun!

As you can see, setting up and running a sports club takes commitment, dedication and lots of people helping out, but clubs can provide a space where communities can come together and socialise, compete and enjoy their sport.

...so don't forget to have fun!

This tip sheet has been developed by the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, Sport and Recreation Program. For more information contact Assunta Morrone, Senior Policy Officer, at amorrone@cmyi.net.au or call (03) 9340 3705. You can also check out other useful tip sheets at: www.cmyi.net.au/MulticulturalSport.

