



Developing a Women and Girls' Section

**Helping clubs develop and sustain their
women and girls' sections**

“A Game For All”



Introduction

In 2019 the growth in the number of women and girls playing in Associate Member countries rose by 13%. The ICC has pledged to bring 1 million new women and girls to the game over the next 12 months. Since 2019 the number of women and girls playing in the Isle of Man has increased from less than 10 to over 150 predominantly participating in soft ball festivals.

In many ways developing a Women and Girls' Section is just like supporting existing sections, all you need is some awareness of the slightly different needs and ambitions women and girls may have.

This toolkit offers key information about how women and girls may want to access your services and what you can do, as a club, to encourage greater participation among females. It's just as relevant to new or developing clubs. Lets get started...



Benefits of having females at your club...

- More participants & volunteers
- Increased income
- Friendly and welcoming atmosphere
- People spend more time socialising
- Shows potential new members how you welcome all
- Potential sponsorship and wider community engagement



Club buy in

- Committee approval
- Inclusive development planning
- Whole club support

Planning

- Identifying need
- Who should be involved
- Awareness of other commitments
- Understanding players and barriers
- Consultation

Attracting players

- Marketing
- Women and Girls only sessions
- Flexible delivery
- Getting the right people involved
- Incentives of being involved
- Fun and sociable activity

Retaining members

- Welcoming facilities
- Equal access
- Quality experiences
- Competition opportunities
- Progression for players



Getting New Members

Bringing in new members to either a new or existing section can be difficult so its worth considering the following:

First impressions count

We're all affected by first impressions so make sure what you're offering lives up to their expectations or they won't come back. Think about the type of session you would offer, where this activity will take place and who they will interact with.

Get into the schools

It's vital to get into schools where you have a captive audience and the IOMCA delivers a number of school programmes. Is your club involved in school delivery? Make sure your club is represented positively in schools and girls know cricket is a genuine option for them. If they don't know it's for them they won't come.

Show it's a sport not just for boys

Many think cricket is a sport just for boys. In order to change this be aware of the kinds of marketing and promotional material and pictures you use. And have a look at the different training and matchplay you offer as well and whether your facilities create the right environment for girls to train and play at.

Encourage signing up with friends or in groups

Females often want to play and socialise in groups so offering a women and girls' section isn't just about having the best players at your club it's also about having fun and encouraging everyone to join in. Try and encourage them to sign up together. That way they're more likely to stay and enjoy it.

Get them onsite and ask for their opinion

Engage females right from the start by asking them what they want in sessions. That way they're more likely to take ownership of the activity and be proud of having helped develop it themselves.

Showing them they're not the first female to play cricket

Don't underestimate the impact role models have. Highlight other females - from the Isle of Man and across the world - who are playing including anyone from your club. Talking about female volunteers, coaches and players is a great way to show girls how actively involved women and girls already are.

Think About:

Other commitments
Team equipment
Marketing
Utilising the right coaches (male & female)
Social activities
Session times
Reducing costs of being involved
Non cricket benefits such as social skills, health and wellbeing

For support in developing a women and girls' section please email sallygreen82@hotmail.co.uk



Keeping Everyone Interested - Retaining Members

Great you now have females joining... how do you keep everyone motivated and engaged?

Plan activity carefully

Be aware of other commitments females may have. Be flexible and encouraging, even if they only come to part of a session. Those with children may wish to train whilst their children are training or playing. Always be aware of the demands of exam periods and be prepared to reduce commitments if you need to.

Promote your sessions well and make it relevant

It's essential to give the right impression about your activity and to market it in an appealing way. Look at what other clubs in your community do and ask women and girl members for help in designing posters or passing on information to peers.

When coaching women and girls – are there any differences? Things to consider when coaching females:

- Most don't mind if the coach is male or female.*
- Always ensure coaches are approachable, friendly and skilled.
- Girls often want to do well for their friends and group.
- Create a fun, social and friendly atmosphere for the team cohesion, retention and performance.
- Don't be afraid to set aside some time for fun and a bit of gossip in each session.
- Some girls lack confidence especially when starting a new hobby. Be aware they may need additional support so provide regular, constructive feedback.
- Competition and matchplay opportunities are vital if you want to retain players and motivate them to carry on. It's really important to increase learning through games and by frequently playing other teams. Make sure the level of competition is appropriate and the environment comfortable. Look to enter all IOMCA matchplay opportunities and consider arranging friendlies with other clubs.
- Think about what competition opportunities you offer women and girls – are they happy? Do they have chance to play? Are they all appropriately challenged?

*Some females, may require a female only environment.



What About Your Club Does it Welcome New Members?

Facilities and the welcome females get will make a difference...

Women and girls leave clubs because they don't feel welcome or the facilities don't enthuse. Don't worry, there are little things you can do to make the most of your facilities.

It's not all about the cricket. If you provide a social environment and offer other activities to your members they are more likely to want to come and socialise outside cricket.

Don't treat a Women and Girls' Section as an 'add on' or separate entity. Embed it into the full running of the club as then females will feel truly welcome.

Don't hide the women and girls – run sessions when other members are there – so they can see the progress they are making. Some successful clubs have male players watching and supporting when females are playing.*

Ensure you challenge inappropriate behaviour or language – make your members feel safe and respected.

Give females equal access to facilities, times and pitches. Ensure female players join the club and pay a club membership to be insured.

Keep changing areas clean and tidy. Make your clubhouse as inviting as possible.

*Some females, may require a female only environment.

Recap on the challenges:

- Condition of facilities
- Not feeling welcome
- Quality of people leading
- Poor planning
- Women and girls not being involved in decisions
- Initial costs and equipment
- Poor marketing
- Lack of flexibility
- Not enjoyable and social
- Initial not for me attitudes



Frequently Asked Questions

Can females play mixed cricket?

Yes, without a doubt, but always ask them and provide options. Some females are at ease playing with boys but others are not and could drop out if forced to mix. Research shows females like to play with their peers, in other words other females. Girls are able to play in the junior mixed age group below if not playing the age group above i.e. an U13 can play U11 mixed cricket if not playing in the U15 mixed age group.

I've heard women and girls don't like competition is that right?

No, that's not the case. Females want to play competitively but sometimes in a different way to boys. Being competitive, and playing matches, is important for females but some won't like the aggressive behaviour that can come out when competing. Competition actually helps with retention as it provides achievement and instils team ethos. So provide lots of opportunities to play in varying formats.

Cricket is too expensive as a beginner – it just isn't worth it

Don't expect your new members and beginners to buy all the kit for the traditional cricket ball. Look out for Isle of Man Sports Kit Exchange for access to second hand equipment.



What are the progression opportunities for girls?

Not everyone will play for the Isle of Man but that doesn't mean you can't set realistic goals to help them achieve their potential. Keep the player informed and always be honest. As a coach your interpersonal and people skills will count for a lot when working with females. Tell them of progression opportunities and share expectations with them. The IOMCA has a new pathway for all female players so talk to women and girls about their potential options.

What should we do when moving girls into senior / open age group cricket?

Mixed open age cricket can provide challenge for developing female cricketers. Make sure this is for the right reasons and not because it's the only option for them. This is the time when, potentially, they will drop out because of other life choices. Involve your players in this transition period – give them ownership and opportunities to help you develop new sections

We only have a couple of changing rooms so can't have females playing here

This isn't true there are a variety of ways to solve the issue of changing facilities – come changed, allocate one as 'female only' or use a rota system at the venue. Be creative!

