

# COMMUNITY COACHING

## CASE STUDY

# SPORTAUS

## HOCKEY ADOPTS MODERN APPROACH TO EDUCATION



Hockey Australia has embarked on a journey to transform the sporting experience for hockey players across Australia. With support from Sport Australia, they have embraced the modern approach to education and developed a National Coaching and Officiating Framework, which they are now embedding across the sport.

### THE CHALLENGE

Hockey Australia Acting CEO, Michael Johnston explained how the organisation's existing coach and officiating development framework had served its useful life.

"Our accreditation process was cumbersome. When we analysed the user's journey, we found there were 13 exit points on the path to attaining a community level accreditation," Michael said.

"State bodies had started adding their own courses and it was becoming difficult to navigate. We needed to deliver a better experience through modern learning outcomes to build the workforce, and our member associations were looking for us to take a leadership role in this space."

"We had a vertical approach with four levels. It didn't deliver the flexible, individualised and holistic approach we needed. If you wanted to be the best under 11 coach, we weren't really catering to that," Michael said.

At the start of 2020, Hockey Australia reached out to Cameron Tradell, Director of Coaching and Officiating at Sport Australia to start the journey of modernising their approach to educating coaches and officials.

### THE MODERN APPROACH TO COACHING

In collaboration with the sport sector, Sport Australia has developed a modern approach to coaching in Australia, which will help reshape the sporting experience and motivate more people to get involved in organised sport.

The new approach is more agile and adaptable to service the specific needs of each sporting organisation and takes a wider view of coaching roles and the networks that support them. The approach also assists coaches to develop a broader understanding of their players and what success looks like.

The right environment empowers players to achieve their personal goals, while developing physical, psychological, social and cognitive health and wellbeing benefits.

With optimal learning and development opportunities, coaches can create the best environment for participants to thrive, whether they are learning to play; playing socially or in modified formats; competing to win; or performing at national and international level.

The modern approach will help make Australia, the organised sport sector and all Australians, stronger through sport.

## EMBEDDING THE NEW APPROACH

“Sport Australia’s new approach was very much aligned to the direction we wanted to head and they provided the support we needed to understand the new approach and tailor it to meet the needs of our sport,” Michael said.

“We set up an internal working group and effectively co-designed a new framework to embed the approach. It was a challenging process, with a lot of meetings to agree on the language and design. We embarked on this project in 2020, during COVID, so we had to hold our meetings online. It meant more people could be involved but presented other challenges. If we could have physically workshoped together in the one room, we would have been able to discuss the finer points of the framework and agree on the terminology. Having the project solely undertaken online did draw the process out but eventually we reached a point where everyone was really happy with the direction we were heading.”

Hockey Australia has brought in Hockey Operations Manager, Liam Dixon to lead the implementation of the framework and embed the approach across the sport. Despite Covid, Liam has received positive feedback when he attended state and national championships earlier in the year.

Liam explained how Hockey Australia is setting up a number of working groups to focus on each pillar in the framework, while identifying current gaps that exist and what areas we need to focus on in developing the next generation of coaches and officials.

Blair Chalmers, Senior Manager – Participation & Engagement, has overseen the project, said, “The National Coaching and Officiation Framework captures the guiding principles agreed by the coaching, officiating and high-performance teams at Hockey Australia. Helping the delivery of ongoing support, guidance and development of coaches and officials into the future.”

## COACH AND OFFICIATING EDUCATION

“We consider the new approach to education to be more akin to a tertiary education model, where you have your foundation skills and then the opportunity to select from a range of electives.” The format will be more flexible, with bite sized pieces of content. You will be able to complete a lot of the training online in your own time through their Learning Management System (LMS), rather than needing to attend a 3-day workshop,” Michael said.

“The new framework allows you to be involved at an entry level program, where you have no desire to operate in the performance space, and still have access to world class knowledge around how to be the best in that environment. We want to support the right people, in the right roles with the right training,” Michael explained.

*“The underlying principle has always been to offer more personal development opportunities to allow coaches and officials to learn at their preferred pace and level.”* — **Michael Johnston, Acting CEO, Hockey Australia**

Cameron Tradell at Sport Australia was pleased to work with Hockey Australia to help modernise its approach to coaching and officiating.

“This framework puts the support, education and training in the hands of coaches and officials, so they can provide a quality, safe, inclusive and fun sporting experience,” Cameron said.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Based on Hockey Australia’s experience, the following factors are critical to a successful transition to implementing the new approach:

- > Consult early across your organisation to ensure all stakeholders are heading in the same direction. The process may take around 12 months, but it will be worth it!
- > Get buy-in from all of your state bodies and member organisations. Collaborate and develop a coach development process that works for your sport.
- > Communicate regularly and give people the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the new approach and what it means for them.
- > Include the new approach in your onboarding process for new staff and board members and encourage state bodies to do the same.

## LOOKING FORWARD

“We’re excited to see the results of the new approach throughout our sport from grassroots through to high performance. In five years’ time we expect to see highly engaged, quality coaches and officials who enjoy their time in our sport and take pride in creating positive sporting environments that meet the needs of the people they are involved with. The entire hockey community will benefit, and more Australians will want to be involved at all levels,” Michael said.



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