

## Achieving sports safety at your club

Every sporting club can achieve sports safety.

Those not sure of how to approach this can take cues from OCJFC's examples or visit [www.smartplay.com.au](http://www.smartplay.com.au) for further advice.

The following outlines a selection of Smartplay sport safety resources available to assist your sporting club:

### General sport safety

Warm up: sport preparation  
Drink up: hydration  
Gear up: sport safety equipment  
Fix up: injury management

### Policy and guidelines

Beat the heat  
Emergency planning for sporting clubs  
How to become a Smartplay club  
Safety guidelines for children and young people in sport and recreation

### Recommended forms

Athlete medical profile: personal record form  
First aid equipment: a recommended list  
Injury reporting form

### Sport fact sheets (over 24 available)

Australian football	Basketball	Cricket	Football
Hockey	Netball	Tennis	Walking

### Other resources

[vic.sma.org.au](http://vic.sma.org.au)  
[www.cleandedge.com.au](http://www.cleandedge.com.au)  
[www.sportsinjurytracker.com.au](http://www.sportsinjurytracker.com.au)

**To download visit [www.smartplay.com.au](http://www.smartplay.com.au)**

## For further information

### Smartplay

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### Oakleigh Cannons Juniors Football Club

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# Smartplay case study: Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club Approaching sport safely



## Smartplay: the importance of sports safety

**H**aving a sports injury disadvantages an individual from being able to gain the physical, social and emotional benefits of physical activity.

It is estimated that 1 in 17 Australians is injured each year, whilst in Victoria sports injuries are the second largest lifetime cost behind transport accidents.

This is despite statistics showing an estimated 50% of sports injuries are preventable through the implementation of basic injury prevention strategies.

Smartplay is Sports Medicine Australia's sports injury prevention program funded by VicHealth and the Department of Planning and Community Development (Sport and Recreation Victoria) which aims to reduce the frequency and severity of sport and recreational injuries as a means of encouraging and maintaining greater participation in physical activity.

## Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club

Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club (OCJFC) is a club dedicated to safety.

A supporter of Smartplay, OCJFC believes "**safety should be the number one priority in sport**" which needs to be achieved "**at any cost**".

This case study aims to provide examples of how the club achieves sports safety, how safety can contribute to overall club success and how safety can be implemented within any sports club.

***"Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club has worked hard to implement strong practices in sports safety. They are an example to other clubs that with processes, awareness and prioritisation, safety can be achieved and the risk of injuries reduced."***  
**Smartplay**

Smartplay is supported by



# Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club

## An overview

OCJFC has divisions spanning juniors, under 21 youth, and seniors. The Junior Division includes over 460 players across 35 teams ranging from under 5's to under 18's. Currently the club has 1,000 members and close to 60 sports first aiders.

These statistics however, were not always the case.

In 2004, of the 75 children that had played in the summer season only 30 pledged to return to the club in 2005.

During the 2004 season a severe injury occurred to a junior player. This event highlighted the absence of qualified sports first aiders to attend to the player whilst the ambulance arrived. The pain and stress this caused the child, parents and club members was something the club did not want repeated.

This incident and the dramatic decrease in player numbers prompted the start of OCJFC's approach to safety. A junior committee was formed which made a commitment to developing the club and building and implementing a five year strategic plan. Safety became key to this plan.

From the first season direction was given to club personnel that safety was the priority. If the venue being played at was not safe then OCJFC was to pack up and go home. Safety before winning became part of the club's motto.

**This resulted in a 500% increase in club membership within a four year period.**

## Achieving sports safety – the approach

OCJFC has achieved safety by employing a variety of sport safety strategies. Some of these include:

### Embracing a strategic approach

*"The five year strategic plan was set out in the summer of 2004/2005. Our aim was to provide the opportunity for boys and girls from 5 -18 years of age to participate in soccer in a safe and non-discriminatory environment and build a sense of community that values teamwork, comradeship, loyalty, and true effort above anything else. Though it has not gone without struggle and at times with tears, each time an obstacle has come our way together we have found a solution. No matter how many obstacles we have been confronted with, each time we find a way. This resilient approach is a strong value the club now shares."*

**John Kostopoulos – Chief Junior Officer, Junior Football Operations, OCJFC**



### Introducing a Volunteer Management System called the Team Support System (TSS)

- The TSS program sees each team (of 10 to 16 children) having a support team that includes a first aider, coach, assistant coach, team manager, team secretary, equipment manager, team lines person and fair play timekeeper. There are 35 support teams overall. The support team members are made up of passionate, dedicated and committed parents.
- The TSS helps people run their day to day team operations more smoothly with the motto of "less work for more people". This program is part of OCJFC's Voluntary Retention Program.
- The TSS is supported by a dedicated position on the OCJFC Committee. The Risk Management and Insurance Department Officer's role is to focus solely on safety.
- The TSS provides training for all support personnel, including first aiders. This is free, progressive, interactive and ongoing. Participants are rewarded with small gifts and complimentary refreshments when they attend sessions.
- Succession planning is also used to ensure individual team roles are continually filled and carried on from one year to the next; the team cannot commence in any given year unless the TSS is in place and documented with the Junior Committee.

*"Finding passionate people and providing the safest football environment for the kids was imperative to the success of the club and the result has been that now there are children everywhere. There are children as young as 5 and up to 18 playing soccer in our backyard - Jack Edwards Reserve. On a given Sunday, approx 2,000 people may walk through our gates. The atmosphere at times can only be described as "a celebration."*

**Helen Kraloglou – Head of Risk Management, OCJFC**

### Practising injury prevention

- All first aiders are provided with first aid training and support so they are qualified and confident.
- All first aiders are supplied with a first aid bag that they have with them at all training and matches.
- Medical forms for each player are collected so medical conditions are known.
- A stretcher is accessible at all times and all individuals know its location and are skilled at transporting injured athletes.
- Ice packs are kept on hand at all times.
- Injury records are kept and maintained.
- Coaches/Assistant Coaches are aware of any player illnesses and modify participation accordingly.
- The blood rule is practised, with spare gear available to players.
- Regular activities are run at the club to promote injury prevention including practising the emergency evacuation plan.

*"The best thing about being a First Aider at Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club is the support and training we receive. It makes us feel like we are really contributing to the team."*

**Vicki Kyriakos – Sports First Aider, U13 Girls Team, OCJFC**

### Appointing qualified coaches

- Qualified coaches who are nationally accredited with skills and knowledge about best practice, i.e. "warm up", "drink up", "gear up" and "fix up", are appointed to each team.



### Building relationships with local council/suppliers

- The club's facilities have been improved significantly through grants received in partnership with the local council. A focus was to have a designated first aid facility which occurred when a first aid room was built into the grandstand. From a bed in the administration office the club now has a designated space with enough facilities to service all members and sports first aiders.
- The relationship with the local council is demonstrated by a Local Member of Parliament being the number one ticket holder at OCJFC.
- A relationship has also been built with a local chemist who provides discounted products, i.e. first aid kit refills and gifts for sports first aiders to say thank you for their efforts.

### Using policies

- The club has many policies and abides by the requirements and guidelines from the Football Federation of Victoria.
- OCJFC uses the following policies: Code of Conducts – Codes of Behaviour including:
  - \* General, Players' Code of Conduct.
  - \* Parents' Code of Behaviour.
  - \* Coaches' Code of Behaviour.
  - \* Administrators' Code of Behaviour.
  - \* Officials' Code of Behaviour.
  - \* Spectators' Code of Behaviour.
  - \* Spirit of the Games Policy.
  - \* 2010 Fair Play Policy (Rotation System).
  - \* 2010 Teams of Offer.
  - \* Selection Policy.

*"Oakleigh Cannons Junior Football Club has embraced the pillars of club life to build a strong culture and environment based around the principle of safety."*

**Smartplay**

### Budgeting for safety

- The club budgets to fulfill all safety officer positions and their associated costs each year. This is achieved through fundraising, like the annual OCJFC trivia night.

*"I always know that there is someone to take care of my daughter if she is injured – the key is that safety comes first."*

**Vicki Sarris  
Sports First Aider, U13 Girls Team, OCJFC**



### Raising awareness of injury prevention and injury management

- Smartplay injury prevention resources highlighting sport safety messages are displayed in change rooms and the first aid room, with copies available to all members.
- Smartplay materials are distributed to all first aiders as part of their training. Smartplay materials are included on the Football Federation of Victoria's ACE Program to which OCJFC subscribes.
- Injury prevention and management are significant components of OCJFC's Team Support System DVD.

*"We chipped away at the previous 'winning at all costs' culture to make safety the new focus."*

**Jim Neofytou – Board Member, OCJFC**