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**Affiliated with Baseball Victoria**

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Geelong Vic 3220

**Notes from the GBA Forum Attached for your clubs reference**

**Geelong Baseball Association Workshop**

**Date:** Feb 4, 2017

**Attendees**: Corio, Deakin, Bacchus Marsh, Saints, Werribee, Guild, Lara, Ballarat, Bellarine

GBA: Tony McPherson, R Stott, D Stephens

**Chair**: D Crotty (President GBA)

**Moderator**: P Moulton

**Location:** Saints Clubrooms

**Discussion**

The Chair outlined that the meeting was in response to allow club representatives to raise issues facing their respective clubs and to suggest possible improvements to the competition at both the junior and senior levels.

While not exhaustive, comments from the represented clubs can be summarised in the following table:

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| Issues/Challenges | Juniors | Seniors |
| Competition Structure | * Juniors at one location * Must be a full season (April to Sept) * Emphasis on u12/u14 age groups * Better integration between Charter and GBA (esp regarding player retention) * Age matrix to fit all calendar year (i.e. summer and winter the same). * Equal competition (location and development for all juniors). | * Involve other leagues (world series concept) * Restructure grades * Season could be longer and eliminate all Byes in all grades (more double headers if needed) * Every club has depth issues but this shouldn’t be an excuse for grading * Competition should be structured and equal for all during season (Home and Away and equal playing times) * reinstate promotion/relegation system * Grade teams for 2017 on 2015 and 2016 results. * All finals to be played at Geelong Baseball Centre * 10 teams in A-Grade |
| Game improvements |  | no Designated Hitter |
| Management Performance | Measure performance of GBA |  |
| Infrastructure | Better access to good training facilities | Better access to good training facilities |
| Development | * Consider junior dev plan as per Ballarat * Increase junior player involvement (reach out to schools, consider other recruitment opportunities such as cricket clubs, etc) * Be more competitive with other sports * More emphasis on juniors (overall) * Options for non-academy juniors |  |
| Support | * Attract more parent involvement * Cost to parents (may be an impediment) |  |
| Strategic | Consider rebranding |  |

**Other observations and broader improvements/suggestions were made including;**

* Clubs should develop a ‘one club culture’ (junior and seniors) and senior players should generally become more involved with the junior competition.
* Some clubs expressed confidence in overall structure of competition. However, comment was also made that GBA should control terms of the competition rather than clubs, although a good two-way communication and transparent process is important.
* Appears that winter comp is growing and feeding the summer GBC comp (which was considered an acceptable outcome in general but didn’t suit a club such as Werribee)
* A general consensus was on increasing numbers across both seniors and juniors
* Greater media coverage was important to attract players, particularly juniors
* Increased signage via CoGG/facilities
* The competition structure could be improved
* Difficulty attracting players/coaches/committee
* Players leaving to bigger/more successful clubs
* Competition with other sporting clubs within Bacchus Marsh (where soccer is ‘massive’)

Of particular importance, was the use of Stead Park as a junior competition venue.

While noting the desire from a number of representatives for a ‘one-location’ for junior competition, the Stead Park option is considered strategic for the longer term viability of the Corio Baseball Club and also serves clubs to the north of Geelong as a matter of convenience.

However, Corio Baseball club notes that the facilities require;

* Better diamond set up
* Clubrooms to be updated
* Water for grounds
* Creek to be built over
* Better training facilities

**2017 Workshop Outcomes**

1. Longer term strategy

Many of the challenges and issues raised by clubs can only realistically be addressed in a more comprehensive and wide ranging review of the competition. It was agreed that this process begin immediately for implementation in 2018.

**Recommendation:** GBA initiate a process and timeframe to prepare a strategy (and undertake appropriate consultation with all clubs) for adoption in 2018.

1. Season 2017

While it was agreed that the competition should only allow for ‘minor tweaks’ for 2017, some initiatives were agreed to, namely’

* GBA to work with Corio Baseball Club and initiate discussions with Council re improvements (will require business case and the support of other users at Stead Park)
* GBA to assist in providing business planning assistance for other clubs having difficulties (infrastructure/growth/etc)
* With the current absence of a Junior President, there was an immediate need to fill this vacancy and to establish a junior management structure as a component of the GBA.

Leigh Holmes (current Vice President) indicated he was prepared to take on the position for the immediate future. In the meantime, a Position Description and level of remuneration based on workload etc will be developed by GBA. Advertising of the position should include all media options.

* Increase participation in 2017 via new resources (cricket, schools, etc). GBA provide direction on the best way to coordinate and achieve this initiative.
* Club data (blueprint for future planning) be compiled by GBA. Clubs to provide.
* Ballarat options for competition restructure was distributed to all representatives and is to be used as a resource reference for future planning.

Meeting ended 11.30am