



"CANBERRA PREMIER LEAGUE"

Competition Information

November 2011

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Executive Summary

In 2012, Hockey ACT will establish an elite 4 team Men's and Women's competition for Canberra and the surrounding region – being the *"Canberra Premier League"* (CPL). The CPL is aimed at stimulating the current Hockey ACT senior competition by developing a 'premier' tier competition for the best hockey players to compete in, the best hockey coaches to coach in and the best hockey umpires to officiate in.

These highly competitive matches will run for seven consecutive weeks. They will be in addition to, rather than as a replacement of, the current Men's and Women's first grade competitions, thereby reducing the impact on, and disruption to the current Men's and Women's senior competitions.

The CPL will also enable Hockey ACT to promote the sport more widely to generate interest and excitement in the game of hockey in Canberra and surrounding regions. Attempts will be made to leverage the CPL for increased promotion of the sport, in an attempt to both engage an increasing number of new participants to hockey, as well as retain (or re-engage former) those that are current hockey participants.

As a way of achieving this increased profile, the CPL is proposed to commence on the Friday evening prior to the Regional Boys Carnival that is being held in Canberra, whilst the finals will be played on the first Friday night of the Hockey ACT junior competitions. The CPL will also feature new rules and initiatives to generate additional excitement and interest, as well as challenge the current playing and coaching styles of the players and coaches respectively.

Timing of the CPL

A number of stakeholders were consulted and working groups established during the development stage of this proposal. Many options were put forward as to the timing and format of the CPL competition. A summary of these options is as follows:

Option 1 – Do Nothing

It was felt that this was not an ideal option and that some definitive action be undertaken to improve the quality of our top level local competition.

Option 2 – Play CPL as a pre-season competition

Advantages

- Reduced impact on clubs/teams during the CL1 competition and in training times
- Fields would be readily available for hire

Disadvantages

- Less chance of exposure and crowd support due to the competition running out of the 'normal' hockey season
- The 2012 Australian Hockey League (AHL) will be held in October. Running the CPL as a pre-season competition extends the already crowded year for the elite level/AHL athletes
- Players are not in hockey season. This proposed timing will likely diminish the quality of the product being produced

Option 3 – CPL to be run in conjunction with the first six weeks of the Men's and Women's senior competitions

Advantages

- Athletes will be prepared and ready to play in the competition, thereby improving the quality of the product being produced
- Crowd support and media exposure will be a greater possibility
- Increased ability for Hockey ACT to engage a larger number of participants to the sport, particularly through juniors
- Timing suits elite level/AHL athletes in limiting the possibility of year long burn out

Disadvantages

- Increased impact on clubs/teams during CL1 competition and in training times
- Turf availability for training and competition may be limited

The Chosen Option – OPTION 3

Playing the CPL in conjunction with the first six weeks of the senior competition was thought to be the best option in terms of creating a high quality competition and increasing the exposure of the event and hockey in general – both of which are key requirements of this proposed competition.

As discussed both with the consulted stakeholders and with the working groups, the impact to the clubs during this time can be managed through careful planning of CPL match and training times.

The timings for the competition have been drafted as follows:

DATE	EVENT	NOTES
Saturday 3 rd March	Unveiling of CPL Teams	Social Function in conjunction with the HACT “6-a-side” preseason comp
Friday 23 rd March	ROUND 1 – CPL	This is also the weekend of the Regional Boys Carnival held in Canberra. It was thought playing the first round of the CPL as a lead in to this carnival may be a way to attract additional support and interest
Friday 30 th March	ROUND 2 – CPL	31 st /1 st Round 1 CL1/W1
Friday 6 th April	ROUND 3 – CPL	Good Friday – Games would be held in the afternoon to allow players time still to travel if they wish over the weekend. A social function to be held in the bar following Round 3 matches, improving the social fabric of the competition and the sport
Friday 13 th April	ROUND 4 – CPL	14 th /15 th Round 2 CL1/W1
Friday 20 th April	ROUND 5 – CPL	21 st /22 nd Round 3 CL1/W1
Friday 27 th April	ROUND 6 – CPL	28 th /29 th Round 4 CL1/W1
Friday 4 th May	CPL FINAL	4 th May is also the first day of the HACT Junior Competition. The CPL Final will be held in conjunction with this to again increase interest and potential exposure to hockey in Canberra. 5 th /6 th Round 5 CL1/W1

NB: Matches to be played at 6.00pm and 7.30pm on Carter and Watt fields

Structure of the CPL

There will be 4 new teams created for the Men's and Women's CPL competitions. Teams will play each other 2 times throughout the Round matches. A Men's and Women's Final will conclude the CPL competition on the first Friday night of the Hockey ACT junior competition. These finals will feature the top 2 teams from the Men's and Women's competitions, as at the completion of Round 6.

The competition will also feature new rules and initiatives to generate additional excitement and interest, both for the spectators and for the players.

Training

A consideration with running the CPL in conjunction with the first round of the CL1 Men's and Women's competitions was the load being placed on the athletes. Therefore it has been determined that athletes will only train once per week with their CPL Teams in addition to (preferably) only 1 Club training session. The CPL training times are yet to be confirmed.

Team and Coach Selection

The proposal for a draft process to assign athletes to teams has gained strong support from all engaged stakeholders, most particularly the players. As such the teams will be selected as follows:

- Any individual wanting to play in the CPL will nominate for the draft, either individually or through their clubs (nomination is open to any athlete)
- Eight (8) coaches will be identified, engaged and selected (by the head coach of the NTC program in conjunction with the HACT High Performance Committee) to head up each of the four men's and four women's teams
- These coaches will be responsible for selecting their team through the draft process (coordinated by the NTC Coach and Hockey ACT Board Member)
- The draft process is to be confirmed, however a draft will ensure teams are even and competitive from the outset
- These teams will be unveiled at a Hockey ACT social function at the commencement of the 2012 hockey season. This would allow for hockey to gain an increased profile at the start of the season, potentially selling the sport to sponsors and media etc.

Benefit Analysis

There have been a number of benefits identified with the formation and implementation of the CPL competition:

- A higher level of competition for the best players in Canberra and surrounding regions
- A strengthened and new competition to promote increased interest in our sport in Canberra
- As a result of playing in the CPL, athletes will be able to return to their respective clubs with new ideas, skills and tactics to enhance the current CL1/W1 competitions
- Umpire and Coach development – a strong and different competition to test and engage officials and support staff
- A competition to keep our elite local athletes playing in Canberra and possibly in time entice other elite athletes to participate in the CPL, further strengthening the competition
- Potential to offer prize money for winning teams/player of tournament/leading goal scorers etc with sponsor support
- A quality environment for the selection of ACT U21 and AHL Squads
- Potential to increase exposure and interest for hockey for both players and supporters
- Opportunity to engage new sponsors to Hockey with the potential to stay involved in the sport

Timeline of Events

11 November – Final Board Approval

16 November – Letter of invitation to nominate for the CPL Player Draft sent to clubs and athletes

2 December – CPL Sponsors confirmed

2 December – Coaches appointed to CPL Teams

14 December – Nominations for athlete participation close

17 December – Uniforms ordered

6 February – CPL Team Names unveiled through HACT Website

24 February – CPL Player Draft

3 March – Launch of CPL Social Function – naming of teams, coaches and athletes

13/14 March – CPL Training commences

23 March – CPL Round 1

4 May – CPL Finals