

Mentoring New Members of the Canberra Croquet Club

Introduction

It has been apparent for too long that some new members feel quite out of their depth upon joining the Canberra Croquet Club. Most will have just finished their initial six introductory lessons and still be coming to grips with the terminology and complexities of the game. They do not all have the confidence to fit immediately into such a “long-established and venerable” club. Additionally, most do not have a good idea of what draws to come along to, where to find resources (books, further coaching), and who to ask general questions to. We have seen a constant number of people join and then not renew at the end of their initial financial year. They either come along sporadically for a while, or in some cases, never.

The club would like to make new members feel more welcome and a part of our club. We need to give new members the chance to have a person who they feel they can freely ask questions of. And as importantly, we need a club member who can contact and keep in touch with the new member. Hence, we have introduced the role of a mentor.

As new members come through being mentored the role will be self-sustaining and those who have been mentored will in one or two years themselves become mentors.

What Does The Role Entail?

The mentor is not a coach. Indeed, we do not expect the mentor to coach unless they are willing to. For the new member the mentor is simply:

- A “buddy” who the new member can ask general questions of (for example, about handicapping, the laws, club etiquette, newsletters, special draws, ...)
- Who is available to come along to some draws and possibly act as a partner in high-low doubles or play against occasionally (if appropriate)
- Someone who can point them at appropriate resources (our Library, the Internet, members who can coach)
- Someone who can suggest suitable draws and competitions (if appropriate)
- Giving them a phone call if they’ve not been seen or heard of for a while

How Long Does The Mentoring Last?

The role is seen as only extending for up to the first six months after a new member joins, and maybe around the time of their first AGM encouraging them to come along to that. It may only last for a month or two as some members fit right in straight away.

It is important that all new members have a mentor for at least a little while, even those who come to our club from another club (there may be exceptions with some from Queanbeyan).

Who Is Suitable As A Mentor?

Any club member is suitable as long as they are comfortable with the role. Generally they will have been a member for at least one year.

We do not see this as a role that any one club member should need to do more than once or twice – unless they enjoy doing that and feel it is a way in which they can help the club.

Who Chooses The Mentor?

It is felt that the person in the best position will be the club member who has coached the new member. They have interacted with them for a number of weeks and know something of them.

The coach will work with the Coaching Coordinator to determine the availability of any proposed mentor before proceeding to ask the club member if they would like to assist.

A person may mentor more than one new member at a time if they so wish. This is logical if two friends or a husband/wife pair join at the same time.

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