



Junior Development Officer
September 2017

The 2017 season has again seen positive movements towards expanding and developing out juniors throughout the state, allowing more children across the state the opportunity to access clinics and coaching weekends.

A rise in the number of “Come and Try” days over the pre-season saw a rise in numbers, particularly those under the age of 16. The South West Slopes and Hunter Valley Zones commenting on how successful these days proved to be. Both said that the day exposed beginners to top level coaching, rules, including positional tactics, and preparation for a season and carnival. At the end of the day, participants played chukkas against each other, and put their new skills to the test. I would strongly recommend running one of these days leading into the 2018 season, and expose our sport to a new group of equestrians. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the day and ideas of how to get it off the ground.

2017 saw the return of the Australian Polocrosse Junior Classic, after a year off for the 2016 Nationals. After lengthy discussions, I would like to comment on, and commend the Albury Club on the tireless work they have put into securing the Junior Classic until 2022, (not including 2019-World Cup) and ensuring that it runs in school holidays, and sees a two week break between itself and Barastoc.

The 2017 classic, proved just how important it is on our calendar, and why it is an essential tool in the development of kids in our sport. Just over 200 kids participated in 3 days of coaching, with the tireless help of over 50 coaches from a range of disciplines, ensuring we develop well rounded horse people, and build their skill set to stretch further than just the polocrosse field. This year Albury welcomed children from South Africa and New Zealand, as well as from every state in Australia. Following on from the coaching saw 3 days of top class junior polocrosse. Noted was a large amount of accidents, which goes to show, we still have work to do in educating our young players on safe play and horse



care and management. It was fantastic to see such great competition across all 3 divisions, and also see how skills learnt throughout the week were put into place.

Narrabri kicked the year off with a North West Plains Coaching weekend, which saw just over 100 riders, of which 85 were Juniors and Subbies. Narrabri again did a fantastic job on running a successful junior challenge. With 16 teams, and players from Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales, it is essential that we continue to support this event. This concept has proved to be a popular one, with juniors relishing the opportunity to put together teams with kids they don't often play with. Over the last few years Narrabri have built a good relationship with WA Polocrosse and this year they sent 11 players over for the junior challenge, they also took them to Marra carnival the weekend before. In return NWP are sending 7 juniors to WA at the end of September to play at Perth show and the following weekend. On Saturday night, the NSW sub junior selectors picked 2 teams from the subbies competing, to play in a curtain raiser for the Junior PAA squads.

Narrabri hosted the PAA Squads for 2017, which saw some fantastic polocrosse and high level skill, ensuring our game is heading the in the right direction.

These 2 major junior events are very important in the development of our young players, and Albury and Narrabri should be commended on their efforts.

Western Districts have also been very busy this season, conducting 2 Junior Development activities. Quambone carnival hosted chukkas and coaching at the conclusion of play. Tanya Mulligan and Kylie Deshon are to be commended on organizing coaches from both in and out of their zone. They again backed up their efforts for an afternoon at Marra Carnival.

Kylie was the head steward at the North West School Expo (inter schools event), which is held in Coonabarabran annually. There were about 150 participants this year, divided into 2 divisions - Division 1 for those that are members of a club and have experience, and division 2 for those that just want to give it a go. The division 2 is an amazing spectacle,



with huge improvement over the years from the students. After discussion with Tanya and Kylie, we would like to propose that NSWPA, if possible, run a stand at the expo, it seems like a fantastic opportunity to expose our sport to many kids in one location.

I would also like to comment on the huge rise in the number of club and zone run coaching clinics. These days and weekends are crucial in allowing our sport to be reached far and wide, develop the existing players, and keep taking our game to the next level.

I would like to congratulate some NSW members who have been selected in All Australian teams for 2017

Makayla Elford

Natasha Holz

Andrew Smith

A special mention also

Felicity Elford

Keiran Chapman

Joe Wamsley

who were selected in the Under 21 All Australian team. These kids are all products of the great work our state is doing in developing elite level players.

All in all 2017 was a very successful year, a lot of last years initiatives have been put in place, and growth of skill amongst our junior level players is certainly on the up. In 2018 I would like to see the availability of more coaches from our senior playing group, this sport has given us all so much, and lending a few days of your time to put into the next generation of players would be much appreciated. Whether this is at the Junior Classic, Narrabri challenge, state coaching roles, or running your own club "Come and Try" day, numbers are dwindling and participation numbers are key to our sport surviving.



I would also like to flag an idea I have for consideration.

1. A junior scholarship program- This is not just for elite level players

Aim - to encourage juniors and intermediate to stay in our sport by subsidizing some costs We would attempt to gain a horse feed or fuel sponsor for example Players would then apply by resume with references to help gain financial help.

Applicants would need to be actively participating in the following

- Umpiring
- Learning to coach
- Frequent Scorer
- Hold position on club or zone or be assisting
- Actively promoting our sport in a positive light (open to more ideas)

This is still very much in the early framework stage but believe it has merit to help push our sport forward, and engage and financially support some young people in the sport.

Kind Regards

Lucy Grills

NSW JDO