



Disability Education News

November–December 2011

Connecting sport and people with disabilities

Innovative online 'club' drives the inclusive sport message

There is a growing international community of like-minded individuals and organisations wanting to see more people with a disability participating in sport. *The Inclusion Club*, an innovative new website, is now providing the opportunity to share best practice across this community.

Directors Peter Downs and Ken Black, who collectively have around 50 years experience in the area of sport, recreation and disability, have developed the site to provide a forum to connect their networks across the world.



Speaking recently at the Queensland Sports CONNECT Education Annual Presenter Training, Peter described three types of people common to those environments that create opportunities for people with a disability to be involved in sport. They are outlined in his book 'Where Opportunity Knocks', available free from the website:

1. **Connectors** know a lot of other people and have the ability to bring them together for a particular purpose. They spread information through the use of their networks and are like the 'glue' that binds people together.
2. **Mavens** have a genuine desire to help and come up with a solution, finding out information about a particular topic and sharing it with a lot of people. They are facilitators of knowledge.
3. **Salesmen** are able to engage others in a way that inspires them and persuades them to do things they previously wouldn't. They are the motivators that make things happen.

Recognising that inclusion often takes time, Peter highlighted the importance of finding the right people who will take responsibility for inclusion while also having the vision to see that little things can make a big difference. Those who are able to reframe their view to see the possibilities, instead of the disability, and who have empathy for the importance of participation in sport and physical activity for people with disabilities are integral to the success of inclusion.

Free to join, *The Inclusion Club* emails content in the form of special web pages.

They use case studies, interviews, videos and examples of best practice in inclusion to inform and educate parents, teachers, coaches, sport personnel and disability service providers. A number of downloadable resources providing everything from checklists to worksheets are provided through the site.

The Inclusion Club already has 261 members from 22 countries in just three months. If you would like to find out more or to join this international community go to: <http://theinclusionclub.com/>

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The Inclusion Club

Inclusive pathways increased by State Sporting Bodies

A number of state sporting organisations have increased opportunities for people with a disability in their sport by conducting State Championships targeting athletes with a disability for the first time in 2011.

Queensland Athletics conducted the first Queensland Underage Athletes with Disability (AWD) Championships (incorporating Open AWD events) in September in partnership with Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association, who had previously conducted their own Athletics State Championships. The championship attracted 39 athletes who competed at the premier track and field venue in Queensland and had the opportunity to be classified and receive expert coaching advice at a joint development clinic.

Bowls Queensland conducted their first Multi-Disability State Championships for bowlers with a physical or intellectual disability, vision or hearing impairment. Bowls Queensland collaborated with Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association, Queensland Blind Bowlers Association, Queensland Deaf Bowls, Deaf Sport and Recreation Queensland and Life Stream Foundation to put on the event. It was a huge success with over 40 bowlers competing, including some who were not previously aware of opportunities for bowlers with a disability.

Swimming Queensland also partnered with Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association to conduct their first Queensland Age Multi Class Championships. Development and learn to swim clinics led into the event and attracted large numbers of people with a disability, including some from New South Wales and Thailand, keen to learn more about the sport. In conjunction, Swimming Australia piloted an 'Inclusive Club' workshop for swimming club representatives wanting to attract people with a disability to their club and provided assistance on how to better promote and deliver inclusive services.

Golf Queensland's Inclusive Golf Championships attracted 40 golfers of all ability levels competing in either nine or 18 hole events at Indooroopilly Golf Club. Queensland Academy of Sport's golf squad led a MyGolf clinic prior to the Championships, providing an opportunity for participants to develop different types of shots required in the game of golf. Golfers from Life Stream Foundation, Gold Coast Recreation and Sport, Queensland Amputee Golf Association, Special Olympics, and Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association participated, including some who had only played golf on a driving range before.

Sports CONNECTing in North Queensland

Parents, local sporting clubs, government representatives and disability service providers gathered at the new Townsville RSL Stadium on 11 October to meet and develop strategies that would encourage people with disabilities to get involved in sport and active recreation in Townsville.



The North Queensland Sports CONNECT Community Forum was a meeting of minds with the conversations focusing on the varied ways people with disabilities could be involved in the local sporting community. Many strategies were discussed including the roles of the various key players that need to be involved in the process of inclusion.

The key word 'partnership' highlighted that everyone brings some skills, information, expertise and experience to the inclusion table. This is particularly relevant in the case of parents and families who have a wealth of knowledge about the abilities of their child. The parents of people with disabilities who attended the workshop supported the notion that as parents they should be willing to get involved in the club or group that their child is interested in, just as they would with their able-bodied children.

Local sporting clubs are run by volunteers who would benefit from the experience parents have in bringing out their child's potential. If the family is able help out in some capacity in the club this would help to both support the success of their child's inclusion into the club and show how they wish to be involved in the life of that sporting community. The sporting clubs in the room agreed - and why not, it certainly is a win/win for everyone, but most of all for the child with the disability who gets to be part of our great sporting culture.

Feature Profile – Jamie Zamprogno, finding his own direction

Not many people have a combination of lawn bowls, tenpin bowling and drag racing as their favourite sports but 19-year-old Jamie Zamprogno is, in his own words, “a bit different”. Jamie has Asperger’s syndrome and reckons he must be pretty unique in liking a very quiet sport, one of the loudest and one in the middle!

As a young boy Jamie was scared by the noise of the explosive drag cars but he has overcome this fear to become a fan and an expert in a sport packed with statistics. He attends the Carnell Raceway in his home town of Stanthorpe, as well as travelling to Warwick and Willowbank for drag racing meetings. His knowledge and understanding of the engines, drivers and times has led to him writing articles for the Stanthorpe Border Post newspaper, which gives him a real sense of pride. He enjoys talking to the visiting drivers and always urges them to return so that he can see the top cars race locally.

At the other end of the noise scale, Jamie started playing lawn bowls five years ago at The Summit Bowls Club, near Stanthorpe. It’s a real family affair, with his father, grandfather and a second cousin all playing at the club. Jamie enjoys the friendship of his fellow players and has benefited from some very supportive coaching. He admits to feeling frustrated when he bowls a bad one, but has learnt to calm himself down through “deep breathing and thinking of happier things”.

This approach has clearly paid off, judging by his roll of honour. He has been runner-up in the B Grade club singles competition for the last two years, came second in the 2010 A Grade and was runner-up in the 2009 Southern Downs Men’s Bowls Association novice singles. He also won the 2008 club pairs and was Southern Downs District Men’s Pairs winner in 2009.



**Jamie with grandfather Artie, dad Paul, mum Margie and lawn bowls coach/mentor Len Covill.
Photo courtesy of Warwick Daily News, 2009**

Since the opening of Shake Rattle ‘n’ Bowl in Stanthorpe in 2009, Jamie has become a successful and regular tenpin bowler. Beforehand he could only play when he was away on holiday but he has seized the opportunity with his trademark passion and enthusiasm. He relishes the excitement of getting a ‘strike’ but above all enjoys being part of a team and meeting new people. He has already gained a place in the record books, achieving the highest score of 220 in the 2011 men’s season and winning both the Monday League and the men’s championships.



Jamie is currently working nine hours a week at Shake Rattle ‘n’ Bowl, where he enjoys meeting the people he serves. Jamie receives regular assistance from Granite Belt Support Services, a community based organisation that works to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and is positive about inclusive sport and recreation programs. With the organisation’s help, Jamie has moved into his own supported accommodation and is learning to cook gourmet meals.

With the support of family and the friends he has made through sport, this drag racing fan has certainly steered his life in the right direction.

For further information about the services offered by Granite Belt Support Services, ph: (07) 4681 3020 or email: info@gbss.org.au.

Sports CONNECT Education Queensland - 2011 and beyond!

The Queensland Sports CONNECT Education (SCE) presenter team was in full force in 2011, delivering 21 workshops and spreading the Sports CONNECT message to 355 Queenslanders across the supply, demand, HUB and education sectors.

The year kicked off with a 'Sports Ability' (SA) workshop held at Durack State School and continued to gain great momentum with another eight SA workshops held in the areas of Charters Towers, Burdekin, Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Murgon, Rockhampton and Brisbane. The increase in requests for SA workshops illustrates the continued need and relevance of inclusive games that are simple to learn and easy to facilitate by any group seeking to include people of all abilities in physical activity.

Throughout the year the SCE program continued its involvement with the education sector through delivery of five 'Inclusive Sport and Physical Activity' workshops as part of the Queensland Government's 'Get Active Queensland Accreditation Program'. The workshops build confidence in adapting sport and physical activity to include people of all abilities in a variety of settings.

The Queensland team also presented two workshops for the tertiary sector, an 'Inclusive Fitness' workshop for Gold Coast TAFE students and a 'Count Me In' workshop for third year Human Movement students at University of Queensland.



At local level, conversations continue with local sporting clubs around the Sports CONNECT framework and the team was involved again in delivering an 'Opening Doors' workshop for the Department of Communities, Sport and Recreation Services' local sporting clubs in Brisbane North in September.

Supporting the Sports CONNECT framework, the education program provides an opportunity for organisations progressing through to a Sports CONNECT Charter to delve more deeply into tools and strategies that have been developed to assist with inclusion into sporting communities. Organisations involved with the Queensland Sports CONNECT Team in 2011, like Equestrian Queensland, Breakaway Toowoomba and Compass Institute, have seen value in providing specific training for their members and staff to assist in their conversations around inclusion with the opposite sector.

Organisations interested in a SCE workshop in 2012, contact Jenny Frowd on ph: (07) 3253 3333.

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