



SPORT AT BISHOPS

We have always seen sport as an integral part in developing the whole boy and that it is an essential component of the all-round education we offer at Bishops. This is fundamental to our philosophy of seeing sport as an opportunity to provide the appropriate balance, together with academic and cultural programmes in the development of the “gentleman, scholar and athlete”.

Over the past few years there has been increasing pressure and challenges which have undermined this philosophy. Amongst others the following have been of particular concern:

- The “professionalisation” of sport at school level.
- Early specialisation in sport.
- Pressure from parent interest groups.
- Off season training and conditioning which impacts on other sports and the academic and cultural programme.
- Funding of outside coaches which puts pressure on our academic staff and parents to raise the required funds.
- Outside coaches who do not share or understand our educational philosophy and value system.
- Injuries due to overuse/overtraining.
- Playing schools who do not share our philosophy.
- “Mismatches”, particularly in rugby which leads to injuries.

During this year we have engaged with various forums and the Bishops Council. This culminated in a “Sports Indaba” in July which included all staff from the College, Prep and Pre-Prep. I am pleased to say that in all our deliberations the Bishops philosophy was affirmed by all the interest groups. The following decisions have been taken:

- There needs to be the appropriate balance between the academic, cultural, sport and spirituality in the life of the school and a boy’s life at Bishops.
- The school, through the overall Heads of Sport and the teachers in charge of individual sports, needs to remain true to the school’s philosophy in terms of implementation of the sports programme.
- All sports teams to be managed by a teacher.
- No full-time professional sports coaches but rather part-time specialist coaches to supplement the coaching skills of teachers so that we remain competitive.
- No private sports clubs at Bishops.
- An age appropriate conditioning programme to be implemented across the school for all boys.
- All costs of sport at Bishops to be funded from school fees. No additional charges to parents for sports coaching and no fund-raising and sponsorships, except in the case of specific events or festivals (**an exception to this is rowing and other “off-site sports” which cannot function without parent involvement and fundraising**).
- All boys must be involved in the sports programme.
- Sport should be used as an opportunity to drive transformation and diversity at Bishops.

inspire individuals

- The school needs to communicate the Bishops sports philosophy and ethos to parents and interested parties.

I am pleased to report that we have consulted closely with the Sports Science Institute who fully support this philosophy, and are helping us develop the appropriate conditioning programmes. In addition to this, the College and Prep Games Committees are adapting the Bishops Sports Policy to reflect these decisions and philosophy.

I am confident that Bishops will continue to be competitive across all our sports codes. Sport at Bishops will not only cater for the elite sportsman but for every boy. It should develop physical and technical skills but also teach boys the important life-lessons of teamwork, learning to win and lose, and most importantly to enjoy and have fun!

Guy Pearson
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