

# The Collingwood Athletics Academy – Expression of Interest

Dear Collingwood athletes and parents,

As part of my role as coaching coordinator at the Collingwood athletics centre I am seeking your input into a proposal to establish an academy style training program for our junior athletes who are transitioning to senior levels of competition, especially for our summer track and field program. The committees for both the senior club (CHAC) and Little Athletics Club (CLAC) are supporting this proposal.

To help with the planning and potential implementation of the proposed academy program, I am asking for your input and support. I understand and appreciate that a program such as the one proposed below may conflict with other sport and family commitments (I have two kids aged 16 & 12 myself). However, there are many children who are passionate about athletics and don't have many opportunities to develop themselves, especially in the off-season (winter).

**Why?** Transition from little aths to senior aths is fraught with a range of developmental challenges for children who love athletics but move away from the sport for many reasons. One of the biggest issues is fragmenting of socially attractive training and competition opportunities.

The successful track and field clubs, here in Victoria, interstate and internationally focus on the team-based approach to training and competition. Collingwood does this some-what successfully over summer but numbers drop off significantly during winter when important developmental gains in performance can be made.

Establishing a winter team-based athletics academy program will also provide our junior coaches more opportunities to develop their coaching skills as well as learn about strength and conditioning that enhances athletic performance at any level of participation.

**What?** Initially, it is proposed that we (CHAC/CLAC) develop an academy-style winter program for 12-16 year-olds that focuses on general preparation for all summer event groups to develop their strength, power and speed.

Research on adolescent athlete development by the [International Olympic Committee](#) has found that early adolescence as a critical period for not only skill development but also has general physical, mental and social benefits and recommends using team-based coaching practices to enhance on-going development.

Other key benefits for children doing strength-focused training include: improved muscular strength/power/speed, improved cardio-vascular fitness, enhanced balance and coordination, greater mental resilience, reduced injury risk and reduced recovery time and post training soreness.

A full explanation of the benefits of strength training for children and adolescents can be found here on the USA Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness: <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/121/4/835>

**How & When?** It is proposed that there will be weekly training sessions on Sunday mornings broken into a 60-minute training session plus a 30-minute recovery session that also includes a seminar (on a performance topic such as nutrition, sport psychology etc.).

**How much?** - All coaching fees will be used to pay our coaches and fund their on-going development.

CHAC/CLAC members \$100/term (or \$10/session)

Non-members \$120/term (or \$12/session)

\*\*Siblings – 50% per extra child (or \$5/session)

## **Who will run the sessions?**

We have several well qualified and very experienced coaches who will lead and supervise all training sessions. We also have several junior coaches who are currently competing in club, state and national level competitions who want to participate and be role models for our junior athletes.

**If you are interested in your child joining the Collingwood Athletics Academy please complete this brief survey:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/68XCZKQ>

For further information please email me ([andrew.dawson@vu.edu.au](mailto:andrew.dawson@vu.edu.au)) or speak to me directly at the track on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5.00-6.30pm.

Kind regards,

**Andrew Dawson** - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-andrew-dawson-8995b11/>  
Coaching Coordinator