

History

Northern Suburbs Basketball Association

Basketball Clubs

History

Sydney Basketball in the early days.....

In being the first NSW association to reach 5,000 members, NSBA can confidently claim that basketball is one of the most popular sports in Sydney's northern suburbs. And there is certainly indications that this has been the case for at least 100 years, with SCEGGS Redlands first playing basketball against Ascham in 1912!

Basketball NSW commenced efforts in the 1950s to establish an association on the North Shore, holding a meeting in Chatswood on 31 March 1950. The intent of that meeting was to establish ten district associations throughout the Sydney Metropolitan Area to grow the sport along district lines. Their summary of the sport as at March 1950 was:

In Australia, the sport is governed by the Amateur Basketball Union of Australia, with a constituent State Association established and operating in each of the six States of the Commonwealth. The Amateur Basketball Association of NSW is the governing body for the State of NSW.

In the Sydney Metropolitan area, competitions have been conducted over the past three years, by the City of Sydney BA, Metropolitan ABA and the NSW Public Service BA, involving approximately 150 teams. No district residential qualifications for either Clubs or players apply. Clubs registering with both the City of Sydney and Metropolitan Associations come from all over the Sydney-Metropolitan area...

So the proposal is for the establishment of a Northern Suburbs Basketball Association. This district enjoys a great reputation in all fields of sport and it is quite fitting that the proper organization of basketball should operate in the district. The sport is one which will appeal to all sporting bodies and district organisations...The support of the local Municipal Councils for the arranging of suitable playing courts is solicited to stimulate further the expansion of the game.

It is not clear what came of that meeting, however it is clear that basketball has continued to grow from that time. Indeed, there was a very special basketball presence in 1956 with North Sydney Boys High school hosting trials as part of the selection of the first Olympic team!

However, players did not always have the luxury of playing in the 4 court stadium that we currently call home. Below are the recollections from NSBA Life Member Doug Golding, of the first ten years of Northern Suburbs basketball.

NSBA first ten years.....

Starting Up

In the late 1970s the only existing basketball competition on the lower north shore was Business Houses competition, which was played on Tuesday nights at North Sydney Boys High. There were 8 teams and the competition was conducted by Fred Hansen.

In 1979 BNSW advertised in local press for people interested in establishing a competition that was affiliated with BNSW to attend a meeting at Chatswood Oval. The meeting was chaired by Tom Moore from BNSW and was very well attended, testament to the popularity of basketball.

An initial committee was formed with Keith Webb, John Hardiman and Doug Golding volunteering to take the steps necessary to establish what would become NSBA. They were joined by George Lawrence who was enlisted by BNSW to act as treasurer although lost John Hardiman who moved to the Central Coast soon after and withdrew from the committee

The initial meetings were conducted at the homes of committee members as the fledgling association didn't have any teams, let alone a place to call home. Advertisements were placed in local papers to attract teams and the first 1st competition game as NSBA was conducted in 1980. Basketball quickly became a regular fixture on Tuesday and Thursday nights and eventually grew to include Monday and Sunday nights as well. In a foretelling of our current situation, the association needed, but was unable to get, extra nights due to bookings by other sports.

Indeed these initial competitions couldn't be conducted during school holidays because the schools, including gyms, were locked up! HSC exams and trials were another impediment to the growing demand for basketball as the gyms were again unavailable.

The first Junior Competitions commenced on Friday Nights and were played at St Pius X in Chatswood. Unfortunately, these games proved popular with groups of youths who were not interested in playing basketball and SPX eventually cancelled the court booking!

As is still the case, the NSBA needed to source funds in order to conduct its competitions. The main fundraisers were an Annual Dinner Dance/Presentation night and Barbeques on Grand Final and semi final Days, which were always held on Sundays.

The initial NSBA competitions were for men only, however with access to Willoughby Girls High obtained in 1981 our first Womens was launched.

From this relatively modest beginning, NSBA has grown to be the biggest association in NSW and in 2013 we conduct competitions at 6 different venues (including North Sydney Boys High School!), utilizing 9 courts, to accommodate close to 8,000 games!

Representative Basketball

Just as the domestic competitions continued to prosper, the desire to test ourselves against other associations started to grow. The first Northern Suburbs Representative teams were our senior Men and Women, who competed in BNSW's Metropolitan Conference between 1983 – 1985.

This competition was played between:

- Western Suburbs,
- St George,
- Fairfield,
- Blue Mountains,
- Lithgow,
- Campbelltown.

And the first players to represent NSBA were:

<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Haines • Marshall Kertez • Mark Cronin • James Brown • Terry Wilkinson • Doug Golding • Bill Swann • Derek Cross • Danny Martinez 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim Poulton • Leone Poulton • Kerrie Lundie • Margaret Golding • Jennifer Bonnitcha • Karen Priestley • Elaine Hendry • Amanda Cox
Coach: George Lawrence	Coach: Chris Gaudron

The teams adopted the familiar red and black, with singlets red with black trim (and the alternate being black with red trim). They were made from Cotton or Lycra and were a far cry from the uniforms of today.

The men wore black shorts, with red piping, in the short “butt hugging” style of the time that left little to the imagination! The women wore black “scungies”, which (at best) would be described as a bikini bottom, and perhaps was the forerunner of the bodysuits of the 1990’s.

Representative games and training were initially conducted at Ku-ring-gai High School, which had a dome gym. Unfortunately, dome roofed gyms were ultimately deemed unsafe after the parts of the roof at a similar facility in Eastern Sydney collapsed resulting in all dome gyms across the state being closed. This sounded the death knell (for a time) our the first NSBA rep programme.

NSW Basketball had a requirement for Associations to have junior program with a certain number of junior members to be able to qualify for the conference competition. Unfortunately, NSBA were unable to meet this criteria at that time, plus we didn’t have a home court so there was no point pursuing our involvement.

Testament to the interest in basketball, these initial representative home games were broadcast live on 2MBS-FM and both our rep teams and weekly competitions were regularly featured in the North Shore Times.

Growth limited by lack of facilities

At this stage NSBA had no home, and new competitions could only be introduced if new facilities were found. At one stage, our competitions seemed doomed when water damage to floor of North Sydney Boys made that facility unplayable. We managed to play games at Balgowlah Boys High, however this only lasted for 8 weeks because once the Manly Warringah association became aware

we were on “their territory” submissions were made to NSW Basketball who asked us to cease and desist.

Fortunately the repairs at North Sydney Boys had been completed so competitions were able to continue without disruption.

In these circumstances, the NSBA Committee were excited to learn that Willoughby Council had plans to build a community sports facility, and through discussions with Council, we became “consultants” to the architects in charge of the construction of Willoughby Leisure Centre. Indeed two of our Division 1 teams (Chatswood Toyota, Wilson Learning Wildcats) played demonstration game on the day WLC opened.

We continue to play games at WLC, and are equally excited at the plans that Willoughby Council have to build more courts as part of the Gore Hill redevelopment!

Committee Changes

The NSBA’s inaugural Secretary (Keith Webb) continued in the position until 1985; at which time he took over as President from Doug Golding. However, thankfully, Doug remained on the committee as judiciary chairman, referees coordinator, general dogsbody for a further 3 years.

Late 1988 Keith left the north shore and fell out of contact with NSBA. Unfortunately, the early records of the Association which were stored at his home were also lost. Doug Golding resumed the post as President and saw out the first 10 years, remaining as President through to 1990.

From the other original committee members, James Brown had served for several years as Treasurer after George Lawrence was involved with NSBA in a number of capacities (including as coach of our representative team) however they too gradually lost contact with the association.

Fast forward to 2013.....

Basketball continues to be a popular sport in the Northern Suburbs District. NSBA has a home at the North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre, a four court facility that it manages on behalf of North Sydney Council. Whilst NSBA conducts more than 8,000 basketball games every year, at least 20% of court usage is actually taken up by badminton, futsal, netball and volleyball!

To accommodate NSBA's 5,200 members, competitions are played at 6 different venues, utilizing 10 courts – and we are looking for more!