

BREAKING NEWS – PRESS RELEASE
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For immediate release



North Canterbury Basketball and **Canterbury Basketball** are pleased to announce their impending collaboration to form combined A and B National teams for qualification in the U15, U17, U19 and U23 age groups effectively immediately, and in anticipation of the 2017 representative calendar.

The intention of this collaborative partnership is two-fold: to enable the best players from the Metropolitan and North Canterbury regions to attend the National age group events, as well as to strengthen the competitive nature of the teams. By combining the use of resources, including the use of the Canterbury Basketball Academy administration, both Association's aim to widen the player pathways within the regions.

In the lead-up to Nationals, each Association will enter teams into a selection tournament independently. From this, a selection panel, made up of regional coaches Caleb Harrison, Lori McDaniel and Jules Schwalger-Smith, will select the 20 best players to form A and B teams in order to represent the wider Metro and North Canterbury regions as a new concept currently referred to as 'Canterbury Combined', although a more formalised team name has yet to be decided.

Those Association players who are not selected for the 'Canterbury Combined' National teams, will be eligible to participate in remaining tournament opportunities with their respective Associations, such as the Mainland tournament. Therefore, the collaboration will only apply at the National tier level. As the Under 13 age group has a Regional Premiership structure, the combined format will not apply to this age group.

Combined Summer Development League

In the build up to the 2017 National representative season, the Associations have agreed to utilise the Summer Development League currently run by the Canterbury Basketball Academy as preparation for the representative window. For 8 weeks prior to Christmas, and 8 weeks in term 1, 2017, players can enrol in the skills-based programme to refine their skills, and learn team-play as preparation for the upcoming season. At the SDL trial, to be held on October 14th, the best 40 male and female players in each age group of U14, U16 and U18 from the wider Christchurch and North Canterbury regions will be selected to participate in weekly skills sessions and games.

The Term 4 SDL will be held for 2 hour blocks on Saturdays, at Middleton Grange School, from October 15th to December 3rd. Specifically, the age group trainings are as follows:

U14 Boys: 9am – 11am

U16 Boys: 11am – 1pm

U14 Girls: 1pm – 3pm

U16 Girls: 3pm – 5pm

The U18 age group will be open registration, with sessions held on Sundays from October 16th till December 4th, at Cowles Stadium.

U18 Boys: 1pm – 3pm

U18 Girls/Open League: 3pm – 5pm*

*The U18 Girls League will accommodate for U18 players & open aged players (U20 or Premier Club players).

Participation in this SDL does not guarantee players a spot in the Canterbury Combined team, but can certainly better prepare a player for the pending representative trials in 2017. Open trials, organised by each Association, will be held in advance of the 2017 National campaign, with dates to be confirmed before the end of the year.

Caroline Whittaker, Operations Manager of North Canterbury Basketball, says “this collaborative partnership is a step forward in the direction of achieving the aims, not only of the respective organisations, but of Basketball New Zealand, in sending the most deserving, talented players, to attend a National event.”

Paul Duggan, CEO of Canterbury Basketball, concurs, saying “this is an important step which will result in many positive outcomes for basketball within Canterbury. This collaboration will enable the players to access the best resources from both organisations, while keeping the regional identities alive within a strong competitive framework.”

End.

For more information, contact:

Paul Duggan

CEO, Canterbury Basketball

ceo@canterburybasketball.co.nz

021 520 598

Caroline Whittaker

Operations Manager, North Canterbury Basketball

admin@ncba.org.nz

027 222 0943