

SAVANNAH PRIDE PROGRAMS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OVERVIEW

Savannah Pride is a community of mentors, educators, coaches and students based out of Western Sydney who aim to inspire young people to achieve their potential career and life ambitions through sports and education.

Basketball has been the vehicle for this, and the success of Savannah's on-court sport program and its off-court education and welfare programs are there for everyone to see. A number of Savannah alumni have gained US college basketball scholarships. It is only a matter of time before one (or more) of them achieves basketball's 'holy grail' – being drafted into the NBA.

THE SAVANNAH TREE



Just as important are Savannah Pride's education and welfare programs that are keeping young people engaged in school, sport and their communities. The organisation has a strict "no school, no play" philosophy that has been a key to inspiring young people to find the right balance in life. Each Savannah Pride basketball team member must commit to a tuition program that assists him or her with schoolwork.

The collaboration between coaches and parents is a key ingredient in the success of the Savannah Pride’s programs and the journey of young people as positive role models in the local community. A Parent’s Committee plays a vital role in fostering this collaboration and importantly, the committee has encouraged and assisted parents to become actively involved in the organisation. Parent volunteers have taken on much of the administration work enabling the coaches and mentors to fully focus on their work. Parents act as volunteer club managers, providing on-the-ground support at training and match days for each age group, and communicating information about games, training and events.

The Committee also organises activities every month to assist in raising funds to reward and recognise young people who have contributed to the club ethos through their personal actions. This helps to build strong bonds within the community deeply rooted in the values of hard work.

Members of the South Sudanese-Australian community who have made the Western Sydney region home in recent times founded Savannah Pride. However, the club has become all-inclusive, taking on youth from all backgrounds who wish to gather “under the branches of the Savannah tree” to draw inspiration for a well-balanced, active and meaningful life.

The PCYC NSW has provided the base for Savannah’s activities and programs although its teams play in competitions – mainly in Western Sydney - but also regularly travel across the metropolitan area.

SAVANNAH PRIDE PROGRAMS

Savannah Pride has six formal programs that cover core engagement, homework, elite player development, life skills and mentorship, education and employment linkages and juvenile justice / crime prevention.



OFF-COURT PROGRAMS



Elite Basketball Player Development Pathways

The Elite Basketball program is a basketball development program for upcoming players that offers them possible pathways to Australian representation, professional clubs and US colleges.

The target group for this program are players who show exceptional ability in basketball but also demonstrate a drive and commitment in training to succeed in the professional arena. Savannah players who have a desire to play basketball at an elite level engage in the program and once engaged coaches / youth workers work with participants to support them through any challenges they may face in their family, cultural or school life.

Savannah founder and head coach Mayor Chagai and other coaches voluntarily commit about 10 hours per week in early morning training sessions, and Mayor spends an additional 4 hours per week (voluntarily) liaising with local and international representative bodies, processing visa applications and supporting players and their families.

There are currently 15 Elite players in this program in Sydney and also 18 players on US College scholarships and four players in the Australian NBL who have graduated through the program.

Youth Engagement through Basketball



Savannah Pride’s core programs are based on the founding principle of the organisation. Again, basketball provides the incentive for young people – aged 8 to 18 - to engage in sport and as a result the benefits that this brings including discipline, teamwork, building self-esteem, work ethic and a healthy competitive spirit – all vital qualities of engaged modern citizens.

Through the program team members attend training sessions twice weekly and play weekly in the local competition. About 50 per cent of the team members are “at risk” young people; referred by local schools, police and service providers.

Head coach Mayor Chagai and other coaches provide basketball coaching, and informal personal support, advice and family counselling on a range of issues. The program has 125 regular participants each week.

HOMWORK PROGRAM



Savannah Pride has a strict “no School, no play” philosophy.

The key to ensure that young people adhere to this philosophy is the Homework Program that has operated in tandem with the core engagement program since the beginning.

Team members must pass their school grades to be eligible to play competition games, and they’re supported through this program that sees coaches and mentors supervise them doing their homework before training.

Head coach Mayor Chagai and members of the Parents Committee oversee this program with the voluntary support of a University Education Masters student who coordinates voluntary tutors to sit with the young people and support them in their homework.

This team of mentors currently tutors groups in four study sessions per week that is also supported by the Parent’s Committee.

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM

Savannah Pride's core engagement program has attracted the attention of the NSW Government's Juvenile Justice Department who has engaged head coach Mayor Chagai to run a tailored version of the program in the State's juvenile justice facilities. The program runs for half a day. Other justice services have approached Savannah Pride to work on crime prevention and justice strategies that target South Sudanese and Multicultural youth populations who are over-represented in juvenile justice centres. Individuals who have been recently released from juvenile justice centres or are on parole are referred to Savannah Pride's core programs.

OFF-COURT PROPOSED PROGRAMS

Cultural Identity School Program

Savannah Pride is committed to helping new refugee and migrant arrivals settle into their new home environment. Young people who are part of this cohort often have difficulty in adapting to the Australian way of life and the new school and social environment.

As a result, Savannah Pride is developing a program to engage and assist kids to better integrate in the school environment. The program would be run weekly and designed to develop and educate young people before any potential conflicts arise.

Life Skills, Mentoring and Leadership



Mentoring is provided informally to all kids in the core program, but there is an opportunity for the deeper development of Life Skills at camps that Mayor, coaches and youth workers could run. Savannah Pride is proposing a three-day camp to be held in the school holidays that would focus on basketball plus leadership, cultural and identity workshops, self-esteem, life skills and relationship basics. Key partners could attend and deliver relevant presentations skewed to the needs of member base: multicultural youth.

Employment and Education Linkages

Advice is provided informally to all Savannah Pride members about education and work but there is an opportunity to run more focused information sessions on these themes.

The proposal is to have a program for school leavers that would cover work, TAFE and university options, as well as local apprenticeships. The program would be run in partnership with local businesses and universities and foster partnerships with local industry contacts. This would be a great benefit and provide pathways to further education and/or employment for young people who do not become elite basketballers.

ON-COURT PROGRAMS

Savannah Pride's on-court programs have two components; basketball competitions and training. Savannah Pride provides two teams per age group in competitions for the following age divisions:

The Elite squad operates across all age divisions.

Basketball training caters for 30 young people in each age group while the elite squad has 15 members.

Training sessions for each age group are held twice a week at the PCYC Blacktown all year long. The aim of training sessions is to develop the fundamental skills that team members need to be part of a competitive team in local competitions and beyond; However, the sessions are also focused on building teamwork, leadership, confidence and resilience.

SAVANNAH PRIDE STAKEHOLDERS



Over the years, Savannah Pride has worked hard to establish links with local community groups and organisations. This has led to partnerships that have helped Savannah Pride to remain viable and, more importantly, to continue administering its programs that have kept youth engaged in their schools, communities and on the basketball court.

Stakeholders in Savannah Pride include:

- PCYC NSW
- Basketball NSW
- NSW Police
- Local Schools
- Sydney Kings
- Multicultural NSW
- Blacktown City Council
- Molten Australia
- Ben Simmons Foundation
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- Community Restorative Centre (CRC)
- NSW Service for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma (STARTTs)
- NSW Youth Juvenile Justice Services
- Savannah Pride Parents Committee

The above-mentioned organisations agreed to work with Savannah Pride because they too have a vested interest in the wellbeing of local youth and also provide services to help young people thrive and remain engaged in their education, sport and general community.

COACHING AT SAVANNAH PRIDE



Savannah Pride coaches form the frontline of the social impact we can have in the community through their engagement in building up the confidence and self-esteem of our young people through sport.

Savannah Pride provides one coach per age group session for 30 players. However, regularly there are two coaches present per 30 players with the Head Coach and/or Team Managers attending training sessions to support the coach.

The coach organises a mix of training drills that enable both sides of the court to be used and maximize the effectiveness of training.

Coaches ensure that all players are aware of what is required of them. Any behaviours that breach the Code of Conduct may result in the player taking no further part in training and, if necessary, a one-on-one meeting between the coach and parents depending on the gravity of the breach.

Effective Savannah Pride coaches should possess the following qualities:

- Resilience: Coaching and dealing with young people with variable skills can be volatile. Savannah coaches are resilient. When the going gets tough and things do not go to plan, they continue to work with each individual young person to set realistic achievable goals and thereby build their self-esteem.
- Empathy: Savannah coaches are empathetic and understand that some of young people may be going through hardship at home or school. A refugee journey is never easy and some in the Savannah Pride program have experienced great trauma. The program offers them a refuge; a place to get away from the stress; play basketball and have access to mentors who work on improving their life skills and educational outcomes.
- Organisational Skills: Savannah coaches are organised and prepare for every training session and game. They've identified each player's ability and any potential behaviour issues that need addressing before they enter the court to ensure an effective training session and/or game. Coaches set goals for every session in consultation with the Head Coach in order to achieve desired results centred on the growth of the individual player and the team.
- Communication Skills: A Savannah Coach is able to communicate effectively across a wide range of youth age groups (from 8 to 18 years old). They are able to instruct, listen and tailor their language to each age level. They consult regularly with the Head Coach and take into account feedback from parents.
- Fair Play: Savannah coaches embody the ethos of fair play and not winning at all costs. This involves treating all individuals regardless of ability/ gender or age, and their opponents, with respect.
- Innovation: Savannah coaches are continuously striving to improve the team and themselves. They are innovators and always asking questions and being open to learning new ways of doing things. This not only helps create a positive environment but also helps in sharing knowledge between coaches and assistants to improve the value and quality of coaching all round.

SAVANNAH PRIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Savannah Pride has an established Code of Conduct, which governs policies, procedures, and behaviour expected of all members and coaches.

The Code of Conduct requires that any issues of conflict be escalated through the Head Coach and Parent's Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

The club was founded on the principle of reaching out to "At-Risk" Youth and therefore Savannah Pride will always accommodate any young person referred to the club by the juvenile justice, police or other agency dealing with youth.

If Savannah Pride programs are full, the club can refer young people just seeking to play basket the option of playing for other local clubs in Western Sydney. For this to happen the club would have already met the quota of 30 players per age group and the child has not been referred to the club by another youth agency.

Team Managers / Coaches record attendance at every training session with every member attending training signing their name to the attendance sheet before entering the court. The Team Manager has the responsibility to call parents to check on member's attendance and in doing so is able to provide another avenue for the club to stay on track with youth behaviours and maintain close relationships with parents/ guardians.

Each Age Group has 30 members that train together. Within the 30 members of the age group, approximately 18 to 20 members would have the necessary skillsets and knowledge to play in the local Blacktown District Competition with the remainder of the team made up of players that have yet to attain the necessary skills or may have other reasons that prevent them from playing.

SAVANNAH PRIDE CLUB RISK MANAGEMENT

The safety of Savannah Pride members' players and spectators is a key focus of club operations.

The club takes its duty of care for all involved in the operation of the club very seriously and adheres to the principle of "expect the best and plan for the worst". The club has implemented measures, in accordance with industry standards, to minimise any safety risk to members.

All coaches must be certified as a First Aid Officer and a First Aid kit is on-site at all times.

Membership is kept at a maximum of 30 players per age group, which enables Savannah Pride to employ two coaches per session who can operate in a safe environment.

Training is cancelled when the temperature reaches 40 degrees Celsius unless the premises has appropriate ventilation. The club notifies players of training cancellation a day in advance.

Before Training Sessions:

Coaches organise the setup of training sessions and do a spot check of the court to remove potential hazards before the players enter the court.

At training, all players' bags are locked in a storage room and only water bottles/ towels are kept on seats on court for players to use. Players are responsible for

bringing a towel and water bottle to ensure they stay hydrated and minimise sweat that can drip on the floor and produce an extra hazard.

Only players of one age group are allowed on the court at any one time. All other age groups stay off court in an area within PCYC, unless given permission by Coaches/ Team Managers to enter the court.

After Training and Games:

All players must leave the court area as soon as possible upon completion of training or a game.

Parents of all players under 16 must come into the club to pick up their child.

Any players over 16 years old who decides to walk home must remove their uniform before heading home.

Coaches fill out a coaching form after each training session and game and add an incident report for any injuries that a player may have suffered that needs to be followed up within 24 hours.