

GIVE SOFTBALL A GO

Play Softball, Play with Champions!

We all know summer is that time when Kiwis like to put on their boardies, slip into some jandals and have a good time and a few laughs. But we want kiwis to think 'Summer, Sun, Softball' this coming season.

At Softball NZ we have come up with a slightly different concept to promote our sport nationally, to help our clubs/associations increase membership and make the public more aware of our sport, without losing that great summer vibe that us kiwi's love.

"Give Softball a Go" month.

While we understand this concept isn't something new, we have taken a leaf out of some of our other friendly summer sports books, and seen the success they have had with similar promotions...and then tweaked it to suit.



6 BIG BENEFITS, TO OUR "GIVE SOFTBALL A GO" CONCEPT

1. Increase exposure of our sport and your club/association to your local community (a chance to show off).
2. Breakdown the barriers to why people participate in softball by offering and demonstrating different versions of our sport.
3. Increase participation (and potentially membership and revenue) by promoting modified versions of the game which are easy, affordable, quick in duration and social (ie: business house leagues). Who knows, some of these social players could turn out to want to be part of a more competitive softball environment down the track.
4. Promote your club/association venue as somewhere that could be hired out for other events (i.e: 21sts, fundraising venues, business team building etc). Once again a chance to show off.
5. Show the public that softball is a family oriented, friendly environment.
6. Promote the Softball "brand" amongst those summer revellers.

WHEN DO YOU HOST “GIVE SOFTBALL A GO”?

Rather than choose a single day where we ask clubs and/or associations to roll out “Give Softball a Go” nationally, we thought it best to choose a **month** where “Give Softball a Go” will be promoted throughout the country.

The month is **SEPTEMBER** and hopefully this pre season month will help softball strike up a positive vibe this summer.

The reasoning behind a promotional month is threefold:

1. Provides Associations and clubs with the opportunity to choose a day within that month that suits them to run activities
2. Markets and promotes our sport, a month will have a higher rate of exposure nationally than just a one off day
3. Allows clubs the opportunity to run multiple “Give Softball a Go” days without added pressure of doubling up on promotions.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL: TO HELP YOU ON YOUR WAY

Softball NZ will provide the following promotional material:

- A promotional email template
- A promotional logo that can be used on other communication resources (ie: Facebook, newspaper articles, newsletters, website etc)
- A downloadable A5 flyer template
- A downloadable A3 Poster template
- Professionally designed posters for distribution
- A downloadable registration form to gather contact details
- SNZ Tear drop banner to promote your event on the day

How do we get the promotional email and logo we can utilise?

Register to run a “Give Softball a Go” by downloading the registration form off the Softball NZ website The form can be found in the development section of our website www.softball.org.nz.

Once you complete this, we will send you the promotional email and logo. It’s that simple.

HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR “GIVE SOFTBALL A GO” DAY(S) SUCCESSFUL?

Planning

Yes, you will have to pre plan your day(s) but it doesn’t have to be a daunting task or consume loads of time in the lead up Softball NZ provides you with all the marketing and promotional material so that’s half of the hard stuff done.

Other ideas to make your day(s) go off with a bang are;

- Look at holding your “Give Softball a Go” days on a Sunday afternoon so it won’t clash with other summer sport commitments
- Have a sausage sizzle. Nothing like the smell of a good sausage and some onions cooking away on the bbq to make it feel like a relaxed environment
- Offer free tea and coffee
- Have coaches about so they can give some friendly and quick advice while the summer punters are trying out our sport
- Organise some entertainment (maybe a local school band or Kapa Haka group). You can offer them a donation for performing.
- Showcase what your club has to offer in terms of competition and facilities
- Make sure everyone has FUN!!
- Keep any softball activity fun and relatively short in duration. Examples are
 1. Modified Games such as Over the line, 6 aside T Ball etc, (details available in the Modified Softball section of our website)

- 2. Sliding station – (need wet area, sliding mat, spray unit with soapy solution to spray mat) Prizes – based on fastest time base to base involving sliding mat
- Please refer to the section below entitled **Tips for successful promotions** for further help in regards to promoting your event

The Basics

- Start promoting your “**Give softball a Go**” day(s) at least a couple of weeks in advance
- On the day – make sure you have your posters up, open your doors and make the environment friendly
- Give them a great experience when they turn up. Be friendly, make sure everyone has fun and make the environment nice and relaxed
- Greet them with a smile on arrival and collect their contact details
- Make conversation with them, be interested in them so they realise you are a friendly club
- At the end of their visit, invite them back to the club/association for either a follow up visit, to watch some games or to participate as a member.
- Promote what your club/association has to offer.

The key though is not to scare participants off on your “Give Softball a Go” day, by showing only the competitive nature of your club/association.

Think outside the square of how you can get more membership into your club/association and this could be achieved through a more social or informal version of the game or through hiring out your clubs/association rooms as a venue for gatherings.

Keep the day light hearted, have fun activities and skills sessions and run short modified versions of our game.

Remember: You will increase your membership by running what the membership wants...and not what you think is the best option of softball to be played.

A check list for successful promotion of your day(s)

	To tie in with the branding – <u>use a light orange for everything</u> e.g. light orange paper for the flyers, light orange paper for posters etc. Light orange will stand out visually when on walls and is easy for text to be read off.
	Use the <u>A3 POSTER template</u> provided (use light orange paper) and put these up in your local shops, library etc
	Use the <u>FLYER template</u> (once again use light orange paper) and <u>do letterbox drops</u> around the club at least 3-4 weeks prior to your “Give Softball a Go” day(s), utilize your volunteers, start a working group or even start a walking group to distribute the flyers.
	<u>Do more than one letter-box drop</u> before your “Give Softball a Go” day(s) e.g. while 3 might be a crowd for some it actually is ideal in regards to advertising and promotions. People need to see things at least 3 times for it to register! Note though - avoid doing your letterbox drops on Monday, Thursday

	and Saturday as this is when the retailers do their organized mail-box drops.
	Make sure you have <u>signage outside your club/assn</u> – on the fence – at least a couple of weeks before the event. Laminate the A3 poster and keep with your colour theme (light orange).
	On the day and if possible– have all the volunteers wearing your club shirt (uniform) and have them wear name tags– this will help identify them as club/assn members that people can go to for help or inquiries on the day
	Give away orange balloons to the kids, fresh oranges or orange lollypops – yum!
	<u>Get FREE PR!</u> Chat to your local paper and ask them to put in a notice under the Community Noticeboard section about your “Give Softball a Go” day(s) – best of all - it is a FREE service. You can do the same with the mainstream radio stations too such as –Classic Hits, The Breeze, More FM etc etc.
	Invite your local journalist to the event and ask if they will write a story.
	Use the <u>EMAIL template</u> provided regarding your “Give Softball a Go” day(s) and send it to all your club members asking them to send it onto their contacts, their friends and family in the area. You could even try and utilise contacts at your Regional Sports Trust.
	Use word-of-mouth – it’s amazing how fast the word can spread

All the best