



SHAPING THE FUTURE FOR

WOMEN & GIRLS

IN AMERICAN CRICKET

(2021 – 2023)

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OUR VISION

To establish a more equitable gender balance and increased levels of female engagement across all aspects of the game.

WHY?

Being a more inclusive and diverse sport will allow cricket to better represent and engage with society and bring new energy, interest, value and perspective into the sport and enrich more lives than ever before.

INTRODUCTION

Although there is a high level of interest among women and girls in cricket around the world, interest is low in the USA, and women and girls have been under-represented across all aspects of the sport for decades.

The rate of female participation in the USA has been particularly low, and it has suffered from an inadequate domestic structure and a lack of investment and organizational interest in developing a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

Put alongside the geographical expanse of the US territory and its associated logistical challenges as well as the significant competition from established sports in this country, it is not surprising that there has been no material growth in the number of females who play, follow or participate in any way with the sport.

However, recent trends towards gender equity in sport and society, as well as Title IX legislation that has resulted in an explosion of sports programs at high school, college and university, help to provide an environment in which material growth can now be achieved. There is an increasing demand for women's sporting content and new participation opportunities and programs are being established in a number of sports across the country. The recent growth and interest in women's cricket around the globe together with the prevailing interest and conditions surrounding women's sports in the USA therefore creates a fantastic opportunity for cricket to be able to drive a similar upsurge in popularity.

The recent incorporation of USA Cricket has provided a fresh start for the sport and has brought about female representation for the first time ever on the USA Cricket Board and within various sub-committees.

Building upon that progress in its Foundational Plan, USA Cricket recently identified the importance of 'focusing its time, resources and energy on developing strategies and delivering key initiatives that harness the popularity of women's sport to increase the levels of participation of women and girls across the country.' The identification of this important strategic choice over the next three years underlines the need for USA Cricket to strive for greater inclusion and diversity than ever before. After all, by addressing the current disparity and taking steps to encourage a more equitable gender balance across all aspects of the sport, it can also grow the game within the USA in an exciting and sustainable way.

A Women & Girls Committee was formed specifically to develop this plan in alignment with the strategic objectives set out in USA Cricket's Foundational Plan. In putting this plan together, the Committee has considered these matters through a female lens to help identify where we should invest our limited time, resources and energy to have maximum impact and to achieve the overarching vision for this plan. It was developed by the Committee with valuable contributions from current and former USA women players, staff, volunteers, clubs, leagues, the USA Cricket board of directors and other stakeholders, and is centered around nine key growth initiatives that are achievable by the end of 2023.

To deliver this Plan successfully, we will need to establish key strategic partnerships, both internationally and domestically, and leverage the wide and long-established cricketing network of leagues, clubs, academies and events that already exist within the USA, most of which have developed over the years to serve and promote primarily male interests. However, that existing network now provides the single-biggest platform upon which desired growth can be built, and with exciting developments in the international arena, such as the creation of an ICC Women's Under 19 World Cup and the potential for men's and women's cricket to be included in the Los Angeles 2028 Summer Olympic Games, it is a fantastic time to promote and support women's and girls' cricket in the USA.



A white ink signature of Nadia T. Gruny on a dark background.

Nadia T. Gruny
Chair of the Women & Girls Committee



A white ink signature of Iain Higgins on a dark background.

Iain Higgins
Chief Executive

USA Cricket Women & Girls Committee:

Nadia Gruny (Chair), Catherine Carlson, John Aaron, Sham Chotoo, Priya Singh



9 KEY GROWTH INITIATIVES

To achieve a more equitable gender balance and increased levels of engagement across all aspects of the game, USA Cricket will aim to deliver the following 9 KEY GROWTH INITIATIVES over the next three years:

INCREASE PARTICIPATION

- 1 Support the creation of an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for women and girls at the domestic level
- 2 Develop new participation opportunities for women and girls
- 3 Create opportunities for increased representation of women across all areas of the sport

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

- 1 Establish a clear domestic structure and pathway to female national teams
- 2 Develop a sustainable high-performance program and support structure and environment
- 3 Create increased competitive international match opportunities

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

- 1 Change the prevailing attitudes toward women's cricket
- 2 Improve the quality and reach of coverage of women's cricket in the media
- 3 Host showpiece events that inspire new and existing players and fans





3 REVENUE INITIATIVES

The successful delivery of the growth initiatives will create and realize new opportunities to raise revenue that will help USA Cricket to operate sustainably in the future. We will develop a new value proposition for new and existing partners as the growth continues, and we have identified the following 3 REVENUE INITIATIVES which will be our focus over the next three years:

1. SPONSORSHIP
Target new sponsors and partners of women's and girls' teams, programs and activities

2. FUNDRAISING
Create new fundraising programs and opportunities

3. MERCHANDISE
Develop new USA Cricket merchandise for women and girls

OUR VALUES

To have the best chance of achieving the above GROWTH INITIATIVES we need to operate and be guided in all of our decision-making by the USA Cricket values:

Act with courage

Work together as a team

Be inclusive

Act with integrity

Engage with the community

Hold each other accountable





INCREASE PARTICIPATION

THE OPPORTUNITY

Since women's cricket was established in the USA more than a decade ago, participation levels in all areas of the game have been extremely low. This lack of participation results from a number of factors, including the absence in the domestic structure of fun and engaging entry level programs that are appealing to girls and a clear junior pathway and structure, infrequent and non-competitive matches and a lack of cricket programs accessible by girls and women in high schools, colleges and universities.

Although there is a passionate volunteer and parent base associated with the small group of female players who are engaged, the general lack of players has also resulted in a dearth of women who participate in coaching, umpiring or the administration of the sport in this country.

To realize the full potential of the size, resources and increasingly supportive environment for women's sport in the USA, we need to create a cohesive domestic structure that provides low barriers to female access and participation, and new and plentiful opportunities for women and girls to engage with all aspects of the sport. We also need to create an environment that is safe, friendly and welcoming to all of its female participants.

There are lots of already established clubs, academies and leagues participating in various hard and soft-ball formats of the sport across the country, which can provide a great opportunity to grow the participation levels, as well as wide network of US youth, afterschool and summer camp programs that can be used to help expose the sport to a wider audience.



WHAT WE WILL DO BY 2023

KEY INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE
<p>Support the creation of an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for women and girls at the domestic level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a program to accelerate the adoption of women's and girls' programs within existing domestic Leagues/ Clubs/Academies 2. Incentivize Leagues/Clubs/Academies to run women's and girls' programs and provide greater access to appropriate facilities and equipment 3. Engage parents and volunteers as champions of women's and girls' cricket in the community 4. Implement policies that increase the safety and security of women and girls within existing Leagues/Clubs Academies 	<p>More Leagues, Clubs and Academies offering women's and girls' programs</p>
<p>Develop new participation opportunities for women and girls</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Entry Level Program for schools and after-school programs that is appealing to young girls 2. Develop a College Cricket Program that is appealing to female students 3. Support the use of modified formats to help introduce women/girls to the sport 4. Stage female-friendly community cricket awareness events 	<p>More women's domestic teams and matches</p> <p>Enhanced inclusivity within the domestic environment</p> <p>More female players</p>
<p>Create opportunities for increased representation of women across all areas of the sport</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop female-focused internship and volunteer programs 2. Support increased certification of female coaches, umpires, scorers, support staff and administrators 3. Encourage the appointment of women to coaching, umpiring and commentary roles 4. Implement policies that promote increased gender diversity in the workforce and across the entire USA Cricket governance structure 5. Increase recognition and promotion for local and national female players, officials and administrators as role models 	<p>More first-time female players</p> <p>More female coaches, officials and administrators</p>

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE



THE OPPORTUNITY

Over the past few years there has been great progress in the appeal, value and importance placed on the international women's game, and an increase in the number of playing opportunities and events for senior and junior national and representative teams, as well as greater recognition and reward for female cricketers worldwide.

With an established group of experienced players and role models, a growing pool of competitive girls and a progressive national culture that embraces and supports fitness, recreational and elite sporting performance by women and girls as well as local and competitive opportunities within the Americas region, USA Cricket is well placed to capitalize on this forward momentum and to support a rapid improvement in the competitiveness of its international teams.

However, the foundation for sustainable growth and improvement at international level lies in the development of a strong domestic support structure and pathway, underpinned by an increasingly broad number of participants at all levels of the sport in an environment that encourages and enables the best of those players to press for inclusion in national teams and squads.

Unfortunately, over the past decade there has been little investment in the development of that support structure and environment. These challenges have often been exacerbated by infrequent international and domestic competition and match opportunities, poor or inaccessible facilities, and further compounded in recent times by the COVID pandemic which has resulted in a long period of inactivity.

Given the embryonic level of women's cricket in the USA, the desired progress at international level can only be made through a concerted focus and investment on the identification of new talent, the creation of increased playing opportunities for them and a support structure that enables them to develop individually and as teams.



WHAT WE WILL DO BY 2023

KEY INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE
<p>Establish a clear domestic structure and pathway to female national teams</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct Talent Identification events, including to identify and encourage talent from other sports 2. Create nationwide scouting network to unearth new talent 3. Create a fixed calendar of intra-regional, regional and national cricket competitions for women and girls 	<p>Better and earlier identification of talented players</p>
<p>Develop a sustainable high-performance program and support structure and environment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a long-term High-Performance Plan which sets out how we will improve the standard of our players, coordinate an optimal playing calendar, identify and support our best talent and put in place quality training facilities and support structures 2. Establish national age group national training squads and teams 3. Establish a national U19 tournament 4. Appoint a national junior coach 5. Develop a mentor program involving senior members of national squads supporting junior players 6. Create mixed gender Zonal training hubs for senior and junior players 7. Introduce player stipends/contracts and other support arrangements to national players 8. Appoint commercial partners who will support national teams and players 	<p>More individual and team opportunities to participate in competitive cricket</p> <p>Clarity around the pathway to female national teams</p>
<p>Create increased competitive international match opportunities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish annual North American Championship for women and girls 2. Optimize relationship with Cricket West Indies to secure regional competition opportunities 3. Develop Minor League Cricket (or similar) for women to complement new domestic structure 4. Seek opportunities for players to participate in foreign competitions and events 5. Secure increased number of international fixtures 	<p>More women and girls participating in the sport</p> <p>Better individual performances</p> <p>Better team performances</p> <p>More visibility and profile of national teams</p> <p>Qualification for more global events</p>



INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

THE OPPORTUNITY

The growth and development of women's cricket in the USA represents a huge opportunity to engage with new and existing cricket fans in this country in an exciting way that can help to propel the sport forward.

However, in order for USA Cricket to capitalize on this opportunity, there needs to be a better understanding of and appreciation for the stories and narratives that exist within the women's and girls' cricket environment and across its stakeholders, and a better understanding of how, where and why they can most effectively be amplified.

Aside from increased and better-quality coverage both on USA Cricket's social media and other platforms and in the media more generally, the development of an effective brand and identity under which to promote women and girls' cricket will help to increase visibility and create awareness of the positive momentum in this space. Increased promotion of women's cricket and the opportunities, talent and stories that exist within it, both now and in the future, will help USA Cricket to harness the true potential for growth.

In general, women's cricket and its participants in the USA carry extremely low profile and there is a lot of work to be done to change the perceptions and attitudes toward women's cricket and its players. There are a number of steps that can begin to address this, but the overarching communications and marketing strategy must change the prevailing narrative about women's cricket and build a consensus around its importance, value and the potential for growth. This will require a collective and concerted effort over an extended period across the entire community and within key stakeholder groups, but there couldn't be a better time for USA Cricket to play its role in leading the dialogue and activity.

Success elsewhere in this plan will, in turn, create the platform on which the future female heroes, role models and influential players, teams and others can be developed, and around which the promotion of the sport and its opportunities to other women and girls can be driven.



WHAT WE WILL DO BY 2023

KEY INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE
<p>Change the prevailing attitudes toward women's cricket</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a new and engaging brand and marketing campaign specifically to promote women's cricket in the USA 2. Increase number of female voices on men's and women's cricket commentary 3. Establish ambassador program for women's cricket in the USA involving a broad range of influencers 4. Support and promote the creation of relevant community content (i.e. photos and videos) 5. Targeted on-line competitions that raise the visibility and profile of women's cricket (e.g. designing team song, mascot, logo, kit etc.) 	<p>More engagement with women's cricket and related content</p> <p>More ambassadors for female cricket</p>
<p>Improve the quality and reach of coverage of women's cricket in the media</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the quantity and quality of women and girls' content on the USA Cricket website and social media channels. 2. Actively seek increased media coverage in local, regional, and national media for women and girls cricket events. 3. Broadcast or live-stream all women and girls' international and key domestic matches. 4. Updated player profile section on USA Cricket website 5. Develop a newsletter containing only content about women and girls' cricket 	<p>More female match commentators</p> <p>More female cricket content</p> <p>More fans of female cricket</p>
<p>Host showpiece events that inspire new and existing players and fans</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote female exhibition matches around key domestic tournaments and events (e.g. Minor League Cricket and Major League Cricket) 2. Bid to host future ICC events for women and girls 	<p>More female fans of cricket</p> <p>More women's cricket played in the USA</p>



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