

History of the Taranaki Secondary Schools' Sports Association



The idea of initiating a Secondary School Sports Association was first mooted in this region by Dr. George Thompson in 1952. On the 21st March 1953 the first athletics “intersecs” were held at Rugby Park.

For the next few years the “intersecs” were rotated between Rugby Park, Pukekura Park and Victoria Park, Stratford. A special train was laid on to transport supporters and athletes to Stratford.

Following the success of the “intersecs”, in 1957, the first Intersecondary Swimming Sports were held at the Municipal Pool in New Plymouth. In 1962, the first Gymnastics Championships were held at New Plymouth Boys High School.

During the 1960’s a number of new events were added under the guidance of the then Secretary of TSSSA, Mr. Dan Archibald.

By 1990 the number of events on offer had increased to 21. A letter was received from the TSSPA expressing their concern over the number of interruptions to class time. Mr. Barry Finch of Spotswood College was president of the Association at the time and along with a subcommittee drew up a revised constitution and set guidelines for the future management of the TSSSA.

In 1993 the Association appointed Steve ‘Coach’ McKean the first Regional Sports Director of the TSSSA. This was the start of the association as we know it today.

As more schools took on sports coordinators and the understanding of the value of sport increased within schools, so too did the amount of events and programs run by TSSSA. Steve, along with many principals who have sat on the board of management for TSSSA, were able to secure funding streams that have enabled TSSSA to prosper.

Today TSSSA offers all secondary school students of all abilities the opportunity to take part in over 50 events each year, the vast majority of these at no entry cost to the student. TSSSA’s programs and scope of influence has grown to incorporate advocacy and leadership to its member schools within the secondary school sporting space.

The sporting landscape as we know it is ever changing with many obstacles and challenges ahead for the association. However, “we are what we are, because we were what we were”. Due to the work of countless individuals who have come before, the Association will be able to meet these challenges and provide students and schools with a sports program that is second to none.