

3x3 Courts

As Basketball ACT President, I thought I'd take the opportunity to provide everyone with some information about the new three-on-three (3x3) courts at the Belconnen stadium, which will be completed in April. This is a really exciting development for basketball in the ACT, and has some very positive impacts for us as an organisation. I'd like to provide some background and explanation, and I thought a format of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers might be useful.

1. Why 3x3?

There are lots of reasons. Firstly, there is a strong trend across many sports towards a shorter, faster, informal, and more recreational version of their product. Test cricket has one day cricket, and one day cricket has Twenty20. Soccer has futsal, tennis has FAST4, AFL has nines, and rugby has sevens. Even lawn bowls has Jack Attack. Secondly, FIBA, Basketball Australia, and the Olympics are throwing time, effort and money at 3x3. It is clearly a growing trend. Thirdly, it is part of a longer-term plan to build a complex at Belconnen with seven indoor courts and four outdoor 3x3 courts that can host national championships. I'll go into more of the reasons throughout this article.

2. What did it cost us?

The short answer is "nothing". The \$1.1M for the redevelopment of the land, concreting, seating, courts, backboards, scoreboards, fencing, lighting, and all of the facilities were paid for by the ACT Government with a grant. Other than some very minor costs for building reports and inspections, you have scored a brand-new facility for free. Plus the ACT Government has money "set aside" for basketball, and this was part of it. If we didn't use some of the money, it would all be lost. It was a situation of "use it or lose it", and means we can draw on more in future years.

3. Why is the ACT Government interested in supporting 3x3?

The ACT Government has a very strong policy and program to support recreation and community health. They want to help make Canberrans fitter and healthier as part of their "Active Canberra" program. Something like 3x3 fits this perfectly.

4. How does this relate to the planned stadium extension at Belconnen?

It relates in a couple of ways. We currently can't afford the required \$7M-\$8M to extend the Belconnen stadium with three indoor courts on the south side. That will require more money in the bank from us, more ACT Government money, and a fairly sizeable loan from a bank. The 3x3 courts provide an additional revenue source, as we get to keep all of the money from operating the courts. It also adds to the overall plan for Belconnen as a stadium complex with the ability to host major events, and cope with the demand of our growing

sport (you should see the number of new registrations we get every season from the Gungahlin area alone).

5. Why not do this at Tuggeranong?

Not everyone knows this, but we don't own, operate, or maintain the Tuggeranong stadium. It is owned and operated by the Tuggeranong Southern Cross Club, and we are just one of many customers. We have to compete with futsal, volleyball, and even roller derby to hire those courts.

6. What's the difference between 3x3 and "normal" basketball?

3x3 is great for lots of reasons. It offers a shorter, more recreational product as an additional option to a full season of regular basketball. Instead of having to sign up for a full season of 21 weeks, 3x3 teams can play a "season" of four weeks, just a single weekend, or even casual games when they can find the time. Games are shorter, faster, and you always get more of the ball. Actually, it's my own favourite version of our sport.

7. Will the courts only be used for 3x3?

No. Besides being four half-courts, they can also be two full courts. This gives us extra facilities for club trainings; pick-up style "King/Queen of the court" competitions that can be 1x1, 3x3, or 5x5; tournaments; and even coach development sessions and expert skills training. We can also hire the courts out to clubs, schools, government organisations, or private companies.

8. How will we book the courts?

We are sorting out exactly how the courts will be booked and managed. It will be done through the main Basketball ACT office, and there is a small "ticket booth" near the path down to the courts where you can pay for access. There will be scheduled games and tournaments, plus times where players or teams can just book a court casually.

9. What will the courts look like?

Like this (but with backboards and scoreboards which are all coming in April):



I'll be writing similar articles throughout the year to explain some of the major things that we're planning and doing. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Basketball ACT office.

Yours sincerely,

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Basketball ACT