

The History of Women's Domestic Cricket in New Zealand

It began in the 1932/33 season with the launch of two separate domestic competitions, the Amalgamated Theatres Ladies Cricket Shield and the Mary Machin Shield. In January 1933 Mr MJ Moodabe of Auckland, from Amalgamated Theatres Ltd, donated a shield for competition between ladies' representative teams from throughout the country. One of the criteria was that the games would always be held in Wanganui. Unfortunately, in the first tournament in February 1933, only two Wanganui teams took part, ie Wanganui A and Wanganui B. Wanganui A Women won the game and thus became the first holders of the Shield. In 1933/34 four teams competed with Canterbury sending their representative side, Wellington sending a club side, Technical College Old Girls with the two Wanganui teams again competing. Canterbury beat Wanganui B and Wellington Technical College Old Girls beat Wanganui A with Canterbury then easily winning the final to become the second winners of the Shield. However, from the 1934/35 season it was decided that only North Island teams would play for this trophy so Canterbury were unable to defend their title.

Mary Machin had presented the Mary Machin Shield for competition among South Island women's team with the first game being held in April 1933. Canterbury became the first winners of this Shield beating Otago on the first innings in the first match. Up to World War II, the Canterbury and Otago women's first teams played for the Shield but after the War, it was competed for by the second teams from Canterbury and Otago plus the first teams from Nelson, West Coast and Southland.

The first Womens overseas touring team to visit New Zealand was in 1934/35 when the English Women came to New Zealand after their tour of Australia. As a result of the interest generated by this tour, Mr Hallyburton Johnstone from Auckland presented a trophy to be competed for on a Challenge basis and gave the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield to Auckland to be the first holders. Wellington were the first team to lodge a challenge with the game being played at Eden Park in February 1936. Wellington won the game by 10 wickets and therefore became the first Wellington Women's team to win a national trophy.

The Hallyburton Johnstone Shield was played on a challenge basis in the early years until the first round-robin series was held in 1946/47. The first time that the 4 teams (Auckland, Canterbury, Otago and Wellington) gathered for a tournament at one venue was in Wellington in 1949/50. Up to 1954/55, on some occasions the games were scheduled for 3 or 4 days although the majority were 2-day games. From 1955/56 until 1980/81 they were always 2-day games and in 1981/82 they played 60-over games in preparation for the Women's World Cup held in NZ that season. That was the last time the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield was contested with the Hansells Cup being the trophy for the winners from 1982/83 when it reverted to 2-day cricket. In 1987/88 and 1988/89 it was again played as 60-over games before reverting back to 2-day cricket in 1989/90. In that 1989/90 season Wellington won the Hansells Cup for the first (and only) time which ended Canterbury's run of 11 consecutive seasons winning the women's domestic competition. That was also the final year of the Hansells Cup because it then became the Pub Charities Tournament from 1990/91 until 1997/98 inclusive with Canterbury winning every season. In 1998/99 it became the State Insurance Cup with Canterbury winning that first season meaning they had won 9 consecutive titles since Wellington ended their previous sequence of 11 titles in a row. In 2001/02 it became the State League which continued until State ceased their sponsorship after the 2008/09 season. In 2009/10 there was no sponsor with Action Cricket coming on board in 2010/11 with the Action Cricket Cup and Action Cricket Twenty20 competitions. That sponsorship lasted 2 seasons and with no sponsors in 2012/13 they reverted to being called the NZ Women's One-day and Twenty20 Competitions which still applies now.

Hallyburton Johnstone Shield

After lifting the Shield from Auckland in the first Challenge match, Wellington successfully defended it against Auckland (in 1937/38), Canterbury (in 1938/39), Otago and Canterbury (in 1939/40) before losing it to Auckland in the final challenge of 1939/40. Wellington had an unsuccessful challenge against Auckland in 1940/41 and another unsuccessful challenge against Canterbury in 1943/44 after Canterbury had lifted the Shield from Auckland earlier that season. Wellington had 2 further unsuccessful attempts to wrest the Challenge Shield from Canterbury in 1944/45 and 1945/46

before the competition changed to a round-robin points-based system in 1946/47 similar to the Plunket Shield. Auckland won the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield that season with 24 points, Wellington were second with 16, Canterbury and Otago both finished on 3 points. Auckland also won the Shield in the 1947/48 and 1948/49 seasons with Otago not entering a team in the latter season.

The 1949/50 season was the first time the competition was held as a tournament with the hosts, Wellington, winning the Shield with 14 points from Auckland with 12, Canterbury 6 and Otago 0. The first and third round games were held on the Basin Reserve with the second round at Kilbirnie Park. The tournament was held at Hagley Park, Christchurch in 1950/51 but the next 2 seasons saw the competition revert to the system where the 4 teams played one game against each of the other 3 teams at different venues meaning the teams had either 2 home games and 1 away game or vice versa each season. In 1953/54 it was back to a tournament this time being held at Melville Park, Auckland. In 1955/56 Otago were controversially banned from competing so instead of a tournament each of the 3 teams played one home game and one away game. From 1956/57 to 1964/65 inclusive the 4 teams again competed at a tournament with the venues alternating around the 4 provinces. In 1965/66 a fifth team, North Shore, entered the competition and to prevent teams having a bye, a sixth team which was a Composite side was used to play the team that would have had the bye although no points were awarded in those games. From 1966/67 to 1978/79 it was always played as a tournament with the 5 teams competing. In 1979/80 a sixth team, Central Districts, were added to the competition.

Hansells Cup

1982/83 was the first Hansells Cup which was played as a tournament in Dunedin but this was also the last time that an Otago team competed in the top Women's domestic competition until the first year of the State Insurance Cup in 1998/99. From 1983/84 until 1987/88 inclusive a Southern Districts side competed which was made up of players left out of the Canterbury team and Otago players. In the final 2 seasons of the Hansells Cup in 1988/89 and 1989/90 there was no Southern Districts team meaning it was back to a 5 team competition.

Pub Charities Tournament

In 1990/91 Pub Charities took over the sponsorship of the main women's domestic competition which coincided with North Shore becoming North Harbour and with the addition of Canterbury B it was back to a six-team competition. This format lasted 2 seasons before Canterbury B was replaced by a Pub Charities XI which was made up of any players that the 5 Associations didn't select in their team plus players from Otago. This arrangement also lasted 2 seasons and from 1994/95 until the end of the Pub Charities involvement in 1997/98 there were just 4 teams competing with North Harbour having merged with Auckland and the Pub Charities XI no longer being used.

In the 1990/91 and 91/92 seasons, the games were all 2-day fixtures but in 1992/93 and 93/94 they were all 50-over games. 1994/95 saw a mixture of 3-day and 50-over games which continued until the 1996/97 season when the competition again reverted to all 50-over games.

State Insurance Cup/State League

1998/99 saw State Insurance commence a sponsorship which was to last for 11 seasons. All the games were 50-over fixtures with teams playing back-to-back games at the same venue. From 1998/99 until 2000/01 inclusive it was known as the State Insurance Cup and from 2001/02 until it ended after the 2008/09 season it was called the State League. Northern Districts fielded a women's domestic team for the first time in 1999/2000 and since that season there have been the same 6 provincial teams as there have been in Men's cricket since 1956/57.

The 2007/08 season saw the introduction of a Twenty20 competition. In most instances, a Twenty20 fixture was added the day before the first of the back-to-back 50-over games were played between the same 2 teams.

Action Cricket Cup and Action Cricket Twenty20

In 2010/11 and 2011/12 Action Cricket became the sponsor of women's domestic cricket. In both seasons all teams played two Twenty20 games and one 50-over game at a venue instead of the one Twenty20 and two 50-over games that had been used in the previous 3 seasons.

New Zealand Women's One-day and Twenty20 Competitions

Since 2012/13 there has been no sponsor of the women's domestic competitions so they have been known as the New Zealand Women's One-day Competition and the New Zealand Women's Twenty20 Competition. They also reverted to the system used from 2007/08 to 2009/10 of playing one Twenty20 and two 50-over games at the same venue between 2 teams.

Wellington v New Zealand

The first New Zealand Women's team to go overseas was in 1937/38 when a team went to Australia and played 5 games. They played a game against Wellington before they left for Australia and played Wellington again after they returned to New Zealand, both games being held at the Basin Reserve.

Wellington's National Titles

Apart from winning the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield in the first challenge game in 1936 and successfully defending it on 4 occasions before losing it to Auckland and winning the Shield in 1949/50 on the first occasion it was held as a National Tournament, Wellington have had their share of successes on the domestic scene. In 1950/51 Wellington retained the Shield with 12 points, Canterbury were second with 9 followed by Auckland (3) and Otago (0).

Wellington's next success came in 1952/53 when they finished with 20 points with Auckland second on 18 points. In 1953/54 Wellington retained the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield in the tournament held at Melville Park, Auckland when they again finished on 20 points beating Auckland by 2 points once more. Wellington again won back-to-back titles in 1958/59 at Melville Park and in 1959/60 at Kilbirnie Park with Auckland finishing second on both occasions.

Wellington had to wait until 1967/68 before their next success in the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield in the tournament held at Te Whiti Park, Lower Hutt with Auckland in second position again. Another tournament victory was achieved in 1969/70 at Hagley Park in Christchurch with North Shore taking the runners-up spot.

During the 1970s Wellington won back-to-back titles on two occasions. They won the title at Devonport Domain in 1973/74 and followed up with victory again at Burnside Park, Christchurch in 1974/75. After Canterbury had won the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield at Melville Park in the 1975/76 season, Wellington regained it in a badly rain-affected tournament at Logan Park in Dunedin in 1976/77 and retained it the following season at Kilbirnie Park. That was the last time Wellington won the Hallyburton Johnstone Shield with it being replaced by the Hansells Cup in 1982/83.

Wellington's sole success in the Hansells Cup was in 1989/90 which was the 8th and final season that it was played before being replaced by the Pub Charities tournament. Canterbury had won the previous 7 Hansells Cup tournaments and they also went on to win all 8 of the Pub Charities tournaments from 1990/91 to 1997/98 inclusive.

Wellington's sole success in the 50-over competitions during the State-sponsored tournaments was in the 2003/04 season when they shared the title with Canterbury due to the final being washed out. However, Wellington were successful in the State League Twenty20 competition in the second and final year of that competition in 2008/09. Wellington have won the domestic Twenty20 title on two further occasions beating Canterbury in the final in 2012/13 and Otago in 2014/15.