**What is Autism?**

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex, life-long developmental disability which is neurological in origin. Approximately 1 in 100 children in Australia is diagnosed with Autism.

The core features of Autism are differences in:
- Social communication and interaction.
- Restricted and repetitive behaviours.
- Sensory processing.

**How can Autism impact upon the person playing cricket?**

**Strengths of people with Autism:**
- Visual skills—able to respond well to visual instruction.
- Rote learning—those with good reading skills could learn a list of rules. Help may be needed to apply those rules appropriately.
- A strong memory for facts.
- May participate well within routines and structure. Coaching, by way of routine and structure can be an effective support for people with Autism.
- Attention to detail.
- High level of concentration and focus once interest is gained.
- Reliability and loyalty once familiar with people/environment.

**Potential difficulties of people with Autism:**
- Verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Communicating to coach and other players.
- Being able to understand instructions, especially if given fast pace.
- Understanding the intentions of others.
- Coping with the unpredictable nature of competitive sport.
- Coping with change (new coach or change of venue).
- Sensory overload—loud noise and physical contact in some sports.
- Remaining focused when new to the venue or training.
- Gross motor skills and coordination.
- Managing frustration, stress or disappointment.

**How can children with Autism benefit from playing cricket?**

- Physical activity has been shown to alleviate stress and anxiety—often experienced by people with Autism.
- Participation builds confidence and self-esteem.
- New opportunities for social interaction may help develop communication skills.
- Developing teamwork skills may assist with developing friendships.

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**Top 10 Tips for Coaches**

1. Check your registrations to see if a child with Autism has registered for your team
2. Get to know the child with Autism by asking parents how best you can support their child
3. Prepare the child for what to expect on the first day, talk it through with the parents
4. Use clear, concise language and wait at least 10 seconds before repeating an instruction
5. Demonstrate tasks; break them down into steps or use visual supports when appropriate
6. Work with their strengths and get them to practice and build on those skills
7. Give plenty of warning when moving to another task or making changes to the routine
8. Talk to the opposing coach on game days to discuss any accommodations needed for the player with Autism
9. Address the players by their names to ensure you have their attention
10. Be understanding if they need a break and be generous with praise

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**Join the Team**

Once you register you will be part of the team and are committing to creating better inclusion for children with Autism in cricket.

**Contact Us:**
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