FLEXIBLE, EQUITABLE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FACILITY USE

ONE CLUB - THREE HOME VENUES

Club: UTS Bats (Sydney)

Venues: Bat & Ball Oval (Centennial Parklands), Trumper Oval (Woollahra Council), Waverley Oval (Waverley Council)

The UTS Bats are a merger of the mens' "Bats" (named after the bats flying overhead at Bat and Ball Oval) and the Womens' "Shamrocks" playing nearby. As the club grew it picked up space at Trumper Oval (shared with the East Sydney Juniors, Bulldogs) and, later, at Waverley Oval (shared with Rugby Union and Rugby League).

OVERVIEW

UTS Bats, an Australian football community club based in Sydney, has developed innovative and equitable strategies to manage facility access for its growing men's and women's teams. Playing and training on three different ovals located across three local government areas, the club's approach demonstrates the commitment to fair facility access.

The UTS Bats are one of Sydney's biggest and most popular AFL clubs, with 10 teams playing in the AFL Sydney Premier, Div 2, Div 5, Masters and two U19 men's competitions, as well as the Premier, Div 1, Div 3 and U20 women's competitions. They operate within the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, where there are significant open space constraints and property is some of the most expensive in Australia.

The three facilities used by the Bats are shared with other winter users, Bat & Ball and Trumper Ovals shared with junior AFL clubs, and Waverley Oval being shared with both Rugby League and Rugby Union clubs. All three have unique booking systems and constraints.



KEY PARTNERSHIPS

MULTI-LANDOWNER AND SPONSOR PARTNERSHIPS

To remain successful, UTS Bats has continued to build strong relationships with three landowners (two Councils and Centennial Parklands) and its sponsors to maximise facility access and negotiate shared use agreements.

The club continually advocates for the club's needs in Council planning processes, examples include ball netting within a cricket sight screen structure at Waverley Oval, the current renovation of the historic Trumper Grandstand, and anticipated construction of change rooms and other facilities in the Centennial Parklands at Bat and Ball Oval. In each case the club has worked closely with its junior pathway clubs to seek grants and improve existing facilities.
The club makes use of sponsor's support and access to UTS gym facilities (two locations) and a private gym in lieu of grounds in wet weather to ensure club members remain connected and active.

SOLUTIONS

COLLABORATIVE SCHEDULING

The club has developed a transparent, rotating schedule to ensure all teams—men's and women's—have equitable access to premium time slots and facilities.

Eastern Suburbs playing fields are also some of the most rain impacted areas of Sydney. Scheduling of time and re-allocating space has become one of the core competencies with the club working with sponsors (UTS and private gyms) to provide alternative facilities as wet weather supplements for local grounds.

OPTIMISING PARTICIPATION

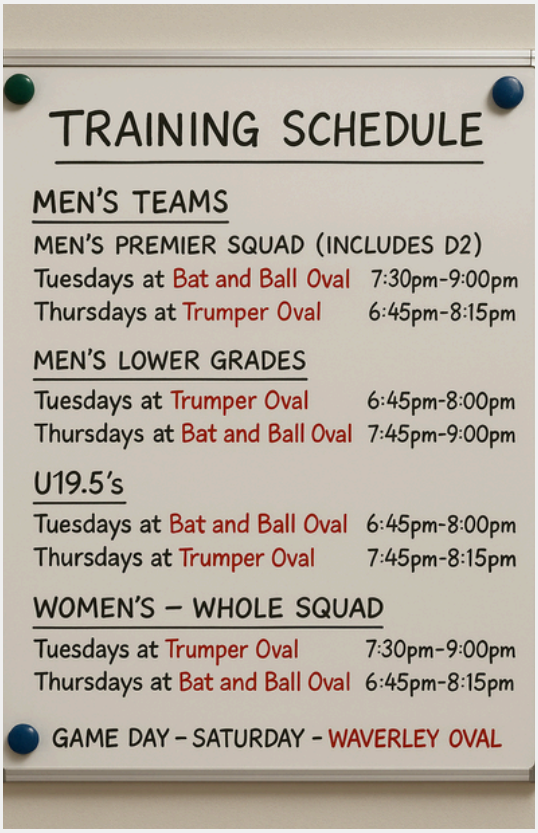
Training times use creative scheduling (e.g., staggered training times, shared sessions) to accommodate the high participation numbers of the club. Two separate grounds are used for training, and teams rotate between the venues during the week (example schedule below).

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

The club has open communication with players and coaches about facility allocations. Both men's and women's teams report fair and consistent access to facilities.

OUTCOMES

- The club manages to grow and thrive in an extremely restrictive open space environment through good governance and stakeholder engagement
- The club achieves equitable training outcomes for all its teams ensuring their training goals are met





To find out more about the approach of UTS Bats to maximie the carrying capacity of Australian Football in NSW please reach out to **info@aflnswact.com.au**.