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Te Taitokerau to host inaugural Indigenous Youth Basketball Tournament 2017

The vehicle is sports but the outcome is the seeding of lifelong global connections as youth prepare to take their first shot at the inaugural Indigenous Youth Basketball Tournament 2017 (IYBT2017) in Te Taitokerau.

From August 14 to August 18, Kaitaia Basketball Association will be hosting 16 teams of under-14 boys' and girls' teams from indigenous cultures across the world at Te Rangi Aniwaniwa for a three-day basketball tournament, culminating in a day of traditional games.

The tournament is also an opportunity for the association and the kura to launch healthy kai and water only guidelines for future events, in the interest of supporting healthier engagement in sports.

Kaitaia Basketball Association chairperson Brett Crown says the event's inception is borne of a relationship that started when Native American Basketball Tournament (NABI) champions Arizona Warriors visited Te Taitokerau in 2016.

They went on to secure the World Youth Basketball Tournament title in Hawaii upon leaving and the visit was then reciprocated when two Far North players travelled to Arizona earlier this year.

The relationship between the Kaitaia Basketball Association and the NABI competition, paired with keen interest from the NZ Maori Basketball Association, has resulted in the inaugural under-14 tournament that will start on Tuesday August 15 at the Te Rangi Aniwaniwa gymnasium.

"The vehicle is basketball, but the kaupapa is kotahitanga. It gives our young ones up here to an opportunity to share our culture with our manuhiri. Because of our isolation, it's important that we can break down barriers and connect spiritually with kids from all around the world," he says.



Teams will be arriving from Canada, Samoa, Tonga, the Philippines and other parts of New Zealand and will be hosted by Te Rarawa and NgaiTakoto marae for the duration of their stay.

Thursday August 17 will see all teams participate in a cultural concert at the Te Ahu Centre before the event culmination on Friday August 18 where players will partake in a non-competitive showcase of traditional games, in the spirit of sharing culture.

As well as promoting the event as an opportunity to deepen relationships, Healthy Families Far North is supporting teams to sustain healthy lifestyles.

Healthy Families Far North is a Ministry of Health approach to public health that encourages New Zealanders to live healthy, active lives by making good food choices, being physically active, sustaining a healthy weight, being physically active and moderating alcohol consumption.

The tournament will be launching a sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) free framework, while offering fruit as the ideal convenience food for players and spectators. A healthy meal kit for teams is also being compiled, in partnership with the Northland District Health Board, that will contain meal ideas that optimise sports performance for teams to use in self-catering.

In addition, the event will be a means of upholding smoke free rangatahi. According to the Census 2013 statistics, 25% of Northland Maori youth aged between 15 and 19 years of age are regular smokers, but 75% are smoke free, a statistic that Healthy Families Far North kaiwhakahaere Shirleyanne Brown says is something to celebrate.

"IYBT2017 provides a fantastic opportunity for Healthy Families Far North to support positive messaging around good health. We are thrilled that the event will also provide the impetus for the Kaitaia Basketball Association, Te Rangi Aniwaniwa and the host marae to sustain practices in the future that support healthy kaupapa," she says.

The Indigenous Youth Basketball Tournament's official powhiri will take place on Monday August 14, with the event proper kicking off on Tuesday August 15.

Ends