



UNICORN TALES

the official newsletter of the Melbourne Rugby Union Football Club

www.melbournrugby.com.au

Welcome to Unicorn Tales Issue # 17 – 20th July 2008, the official newsletter of the Melbourne Rugby Union Football Club.



Special President's Report

G'day Fellow Unicorns,

I have become aware of the severe concern of some members about the club's position this year. As the concern seems to be based on some ill-informed speculation, I thought it was important to give you all an update on the actual current position of the club.

Grounds

At a meeting with the council on Friday afternoon, I was informed of the following:

- We will be allowed to play on Orrong reserve next season. This means that we will have two grounds side by side for the first time ever.
- Council will also re-surface Orrong within two years to provide a better year-round playing surface and will continue irrigation throughout summer.
- Council have committed to the improvement of Romanis Reserve (our current ground) playing surface and will continue watering it throughout summer either by trucked in water or the bore, which they are still pursuing.
- They believe that it will possible to get us access to a pre-season training ground at least once per week so we do not have a repeat of the last two seasons difficulties.

- The Toorak park master plan will be issued in the next couple of weeks and we will be fully involved in consultation on the re-development of Toorak park (and the expansion of our club rooms)
- Council has no objection to us establishing a gym in one of the existing buildings, provided we can negotiate access with the cricket club.

Playing Operations

This season has been one of re-building. We have not had good results on the paddock, but we have done a lot of work establishing a new coaching team led very ably by Mitch Canning. Based on discussions with the playing group, we have commenced planning and action for next season.

Our planning for the off season and pre season is in place and includes the following:

- Increased recruiting in the schools and overseas
- Off season development squads for the seniors and colts with defined weekly activities and individual physical training programs
- Establishment of a gym for use by the players year round
- Establishment of an ongoing academy squad for specific development of young players with potential to progress to elite level rugby

We have also started purchasing new training equipment including the new scrum machine (as used by the Wallabies) and tackle bags. We are also in the process of purchasing next season's playing kit so



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that it is available well before the season starts. And we will refine the distribution process to remove this year's difficulties.

On the subject of the Pillar, I believe that it is extremely unlikely that the pillar will continue next season. I have been working with the other club presidents on the shape of next season and have been tasked with producing a draft proposal for the clubs to submit to the VRU.

The general feeling is that return to the traditional season of 18 weeks of Dewar Shield followed by a short representative season is the likely outcome.

Financial

Financially, the club is in a very strong position. This year has been one of cost cutting and revenue improvement. Specifically the following measures will ensure a good financial result at year end:

- The highest level of sponsorship in the club's history
- Severe cost reduction where possible without affecting playing operations
- Appointment of a clubhouse manager to maximise revenue and minimise wastage and leakage from the bar operations
- Continuation of the ASF projects to allow expansion of the club rooms and playing facilities

Social

This year the club has had (or will have) a great range of social events to cater for all members. The President's Club has continued to be strong and we have also had very successful events including the Ladies lunch, junior nights and trivia nights. There are still several events to come including the Greek night next Saturday (with the first Bledisloe game), the Ladies side line picnic on 9th August and the third President's Club lunch on 6th September.

A sub-committee has been established to plan next year's activities for the club's 100th Anniversary. These activities will include a gala dinner and a celebration match against Melbourne University, the other 100 year old club in the VRU.

Juniors

The juniors are continuing successfully with strong turnouts each week. We are currently looking at the possibility of entering an U18 team in the new competition announced by the VRU last week.

Finally, while I take full responsibility for the overall position of the club, I would like to formally acknowledge the extreme hard work of the other committee members and the coaching team that has led to the results above. The committee is the strongest that I seen it in the past five years with people who are committed to the club and who actually do the work that they say they will. Likewise, the coaching team is now settled into a very strong unit that will ensure improving performance on the field and a successful season next year.

If anyone has any questions about the club or what is happening please give me a call on 0416126267.

Cheers,

Jed Macartney

