

Fencibles United Chairman's Report

AGM, 28 November 2011

I would like to thank everyone for taking the time to attend our AGM tonight and to stress that events such as this are vital to the functioning of the club, so participation is welcome and encouraged.

I would like to once again acknowledge the contribution of all of our supporters, volunteers and helpers at the club. Fencibles is a club that is driven by the actions and dedication of a host of volunteers. Without the unflinching and hardworking support of all of these people... our coaches, helpers, CBR's, parents, grandparents, caregivers, partners, girlfriends, boyfriends and the vast host of people who work behind the scenes, Fencibles would be unable to operate.

2011 was a year in which for the first time in a number of years that Fencibles did not undertake any major projects which has meant that we have been able to concentrate on what is important to all of us, the participation in and development of, football at the club.

I would like to acknowledge particularly the continued contributions of the Cuesports Foundation, whose vision for the game of football and their continuing association with Fencibles has helped us not only with a number of facility upgrades, but also with developing the game, particularly in their support of Women's football at the club.

2011 has been a year of consolidation for Fencibles we have seen continued success for our youth and junior sections with a number of Championship winning sides as well as an increasing number of players making AFF rep sides. Amongst the slightly older players we have had success with Yannick Martonoli being offered trials with both Grasshoppers (Zurich) and Glasgow Rangers. Wayne Stalls is currently playing under a guest contract with the NZFC side Waitakere City. Mathew Hand made the tournament side for the national under 19 tournament in Napier and Jay Christiansen and Martin Pike made the NRFL All Stars side for 2011. Our women's side had Abby Erceg and the ageless Maia Jackman make the football ferns, and former U20 player Victoria Esson is now staring in goal for the Texas Tech side in US College football. We have also had a significant number of our girls and women's players make it into the various development squads for both the AFF and NZF, which is a testament to the hard work put into women's football over the last 5 years.

For our men's First Team, after a long season where that were "there or there about" in the battle for promotion, they narrowly missed out, been beaten into third place by Ngaruawahia. This aside we are delighted that this team is now playing an exciting brand of football based around the development of youth in the club and the coaches Grant Robertson, Matt Byers and Manger Tony

Ansell need to be congratulated for their efforts in re-kindling the “one club” spirit that we had seemingly lost in recent years.

The women’s Premier Side battled the non-availability of international players to world cup service as well as a long list on injuries and did well, though I know the new Coach Scott Harrison and his team will be seeking improvement in the coming season. Women’s Football continues to be the growth area in our game and we are now seeing the progression of talented local girls playing locally and vying for places in the top team, rather than following empty promises that have been offered by playing for other teams around Auckland...promises that are seldom delivered on. We would like to acknowledge the hard work done by retiring Coach Keith McKay in establishing Fencibles as an on-going force in the Women’s Premier League. Buzzer steps aside for 2012, but will still be seen around the club in his player development roles with the Academy.

Both our Women’s and Men’s Division 1 sides, playing just below the top flight of the club, continue to deliver year in year out stellar performances. These players and the coaches (Rieny Marck and Phil Walsh) are to be congratulated.

The largest negative for the game right across Auckland continues to be the impact of weather, and the effect that closures of training and match pitches has on the development of the game. The major issue we battled this year was the effective 10 week closure of the Lloyd Elsmore “top plate” when its dated clay tile drainage failed. This meant that many of our youth and senior sides, scheduled to play home games on the park had to be transferred away right across Auckland. I would point out that the AFF were extremely proactive on this matter as were other clubs for accommodating the numerable travelling Fencibles sides. However the fact is that play on this park will continue to be severely compromised until such time as some serious remedial drainage is carried out to rectify the years of neglect that the current council has inherited from past administrations.

On the plus side, we are delighted to report that thanks to significant hard work by Max Christiansen and the invaluable support of Auckland Council’s Sharon Stuart that the Howick Local Board has approved the budget expenditure of \$3.5m for the development of artificial surfaces at William Green reserve. This should provide us with 1 full sized pitch and up to 6 training pitches on the park, as well as associated car parks. The council is currently finalising tenders for this work to commence at the end of next season. This means that work should be under way this time next year for launch in season 2013.

This will give WGR the best football training surface in Auckland and possibly in NZ. This redevelopment while offering great playing surfaces will have the primary purpose of giving our youth first class training facilities that will never be subject to rain closure. We are currently working on the details for the management of the facility with the council as in order to make it a dedicated football (not multi-use) facility we are required to share some of it with

BBAFC. Though we must assure all members that WGR remains a Fencibles United AFC dedicated facility, it is the fact that such a surface can be operated almost around the clock that allows this type of sharing arrangement to be entered into

In addition to this we have also participated alongside the Howick Local Board in the formation of a Sports Facilities working group, with Rugby and Rugby league to priorities expenditure on grounds maintenance across the parks in the region. Getting Lloyd Elsmore properly drained is a major priority in this.

Financially, we have continued to act with as much prudence as we could, to keep ourselves on the right side of the ledger following the large losses of two years ago. We are happy to report another small profit for the 2011 season. While we acknowledge in a club of our size it is difficult to make everyone happy, we have endeavoured to put a budget together for the coming year that provides for adequate expenditure in all of the needed areas. We are happy to receive feedback on this. Effort has been made to cap our fees levels, as well feel that many people are struggling financially in the current economic environment, however our fees continue to be amongst the lowest in Auckland. Increasing operational costs will however necessitate another price increase in the bar for the 2012 season.

The budget that we present tonight for 2012 is exclusive of grants (with one exception) and this year we have changed the fundraising component following the struggles that we have had in recent years with Raffle Ticket selling. In addition to this we are looking to the membership for assistance in the areas of Sponsorship and Grants administration. We hope that by appointing dedicated people to these roles, that some increased focus will help in enhancing these areas of our operation.

In conclusion I would like to specifically thank the members of the committee for the hard work they have put in this year. I would particularly like to acknowledge the great work of Dave O'Rorke, who steps down from the committee this year. The level of work that is put in by these volunteers is huge and I am sure is greatly appreciated by the members. I would strongly recommend to anyone who may be interested in becoming a member of the committee to attend some of our meetings as an observer and to talk to me about any opportunities that might arise.....we are always keen for new victims!!

I look forward with optimism to the 2012 season, and look hope to see you all around the club during it.

Wilson Hawes
Chairman
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