



Thames Valley Sponsor's Newsletter Number two – April 2024.

Report from our Chairman.

Firstly, I am greatly honoured to have been confirmed as Chairman at our last Board meeting. For me to be able to lead the Board of our high achieving amateur Union, that is, Thames Valley is both wonderful and challenging. It has been great to finally get down to work with the Board all supporting our very hard-working staff and all our stake holders of which our sponsors are an integral part. Obviously, this newsletter is part of our endeavours to give back to those of you who continue to support us across a myriad of teams and groups. Your sponsorship is incredibly valuable to us, and we trust we can ensure it is used effectively to enhance our teams' performances. The Board has been part of this journey as well so if you see us around the Thames Valley Union at club games please come up and take time to chat or share your thoughts with me.

Scott Day – TVRFU Community Rugby Manager.

Speaking of club games, it has been great to finally get our Senior A and B competitions underway for 2024 four weeks ago. It is not an easy job to get a competition organised that suits all clubs for several reasons. **Our staff** always work incredibly hard to match the competitions so that the A and B sides play at their respective clubs together, but this is not always possible. Several reasons affect this – some clubs have only one team – either a Senior A or B side. Some clubs have a B team but not an A side and some clubs have only an A side. As well as this some clubs have a team one year, but they



may not be able to field a team the following year. There are always some special requests to consider – traditional fixtures, club reunions, early representative games, or things like Ranfurly shield challenges as well as holiday periods falling on different dates. Despite all these issues our staff spend a great deal of time working out each competition draw. I believe they do a great job. Early indications seem to indicate that there are some excellent teams in both grades and the

teams have started with an improved level of fitness, increased skills and several new players have emerged that have now progressed through to the top sides. Also, as I stated in my last note in the March newsletter there are several additions to our club teams from players from outside our union that have started the year playing their club rugby here in Thames Valley as they seek a chance of gaining a New Zealand Heartland Jersey. Hopefully the NZRFU will soon provide a more meaningful fixture list for our New Zealand Heartland team than we have seen in recent times.

The staff continue to work very hard on their respective roles. One area that continues to grow is our Women's and Girls rugby headed by our mighty Vixens. I have watched the growth escalate



over recent year. It is pleasing to note that it is now a strong, very important and crucial area of our Union and is continuing to grow rapidly. This year promises to be another step up both in numbers and in fixtures. With our club rugby underway we will also be able to watch some great women's rugby being played as well.

Our President Ross Cooper went down a couple of weeks ago to the recent New Zealand Under 20's national tournament in Taupo to watch the New Zealand Barbarians play the Chiefs under 20's. He reported that it was a great event with some fabulous rugby being exhibited. Ross also reported that **Korban Chwesik (left)** played well for the Barbarians and both Leon Holden (Coach), former AB and TVRFU player Karl Hoeft and Former Waihi Club/Junior player Ollie Mathis were involved as a Coaches and co-captain of the Chief's under 20's. I believe it is hugely valuable to see our boys and girls get

these opportunities on a national level. We will continue to encourage our age grade players by providing opportunities for them to develop their skills and abilities. This includes providing touring opportunities, tournament experience and excellent top-level coaching. I know from my observations and from personal feedback received that our staff are some of the very best and most hardworking staff in New Zealand. Of course, we also know that they do possess great knowledge and have amassed the skills to complete an excellent job of bringing our young players through to the top echelons of New Zealand rugby age grade rugby.



Leon Holden - TVRFU Game Development Officer (above.)

On a strategic level the Board has been refining and developing the constitution as well as looking closely at the Incorporated Societies act and the changes that have been made by the New Zealand Government. This work is ongoing and will be concluded well within the time frame the

NZRFU has outlined for all unions across New Zealand which is pleasing. I must acknowledge our new Board members and the whole Board as we are working hard together to provide the best possible opportunities for successful experiences for all our teams, players, and staff. One thing we are incredibly proud of is seeing our players reach their aspirations and goals – Korbin's selection is a great reason for us all to have a small celebration. I am sure there will be more this year.

We certainly enjoyed better weather in round two from that what we experienced in round one but of course Easter was in between so that meant quite a bit of fishing and chocolate.

Regards Gordon.

Coach Bob Comments.

It has been so wonderful to see club rugby get under way for the 2024 club season three weeks ago. There is simply nothing better for all supporters of club rugby to get along to the games and support the boys who are playing. Many of us remember our own club days with great fondness but as I have said numerous times the players these days seem to be so much bigger than we were. To me they also seem to be very fast and skilled across the park. I was lucky enough to get along to Paeroa to watch the locals play Waihi Athletic Rugby in the first game of this year's competition. My son again took me, and it was a cracking game. The style the teams played was thrilling and exhibited enormous enthusiasm. It seems to me that club players not only seem bigger some are fitter as well. In our day we used to ruck viciously anyone near the ball on the ground. I know from my own experience the stripes received from this rucking were worn as a badge of honour. It also created very quick ball for our backs to use. Unfortunately rucking seems to have disappeared from the modern game. I would love to see a team ruck properly again – but I do not think it is a part of the modern game now. There was a great crowd at the fixture who were



totally immersed in the rugby on offer despite the dreadful wet weather.

Mercury Bay area School V Hauraki College under fifteen boys at the recent Sec. school's sevens tournament at Whitianga.

The results for Thames Valley rugby last year were outstanding as I stated in the last newsletter. The coaches/selectors for both the Vixens and the Heartland teams will again be seen around the clubs watching all the games

over the season. I see them occasionally at games I watch and know how hard it must be for them to ensure they pick their sides to ensure they have a chance at qualifying for the play off stages of their respective competitions. Selection is not an easy task as I have heard that the players must be good people first and foremost. As the club season unfolds players will stake a claim for selection both on and off the field. Both these elements are crucial when they consider who deserves selection and who misses the cut. I just hope the team when it is finally selected performs like all the very best teams that our Union has produced over the last 101 years. I watched some of the Northern Hemisphere rugby a while back as their Six Nations competition unfolded. It was another great performance from Ireland as they were victorious but for Wales it was obviously difficult as they took away the wooden spoon. It seems to me that the style the teams from the Northern Hemisphere are playing is not the style that New Zealand likes to play –

New Zealand likes to play a fast paced game with attacking plays from all areas of the ground. I am sure the Northern teams can play that style, but their mindset seems to be a much more conservative one. I wonder whether this comes from things that seem to be generational – their weather, their reliance on the kicking first five, too much professional club rugby as well as their conservative game plans. Perhaps the biggest mover has been Italy who have developed more of an attacking mindset. I do think that Warren Gatland (Coach Wales) suffered somewhat from too many experienced players all retiring at the same time. Warren is well known to Thames Valley as he was a former Valley coach and has enjoyed an incredible coaching career. It will be great to see how things unfold for him next season as he is a very experienced coach.



Looking a little worried - Thames Valley coaching team Warren Gatland and Willie Hetaaraka.

It was a shame the weather was so bad for the first round of club rugby, but it did make for an exciting start to the competition with all the games being hard fought games with close scorelines. It was a shock to see the rain after so much fine weather though. I managed to take in the Paeroa v Waihi game – One thing I noted is how important discipline is with the Paeroa side getting penalised frequently. This allowed Waihi to easily build scoreboard pressure through successfully taking penalty kicks. I think Paeroa will challenge later opposition teams later in the season. Round two games were thankfully played in reasonable, but very hot humid weather conditions so there was plenty of action to watch. It also gave some players time to recover from injuries as the Easter break was free from club games for recovery. I must say that I also enjoyed round two. – My son took me across to Te Aroha to watch the double fixture that was played at Boyd Park, as both Waihou and COBRAS had home games. I must say that both games were enjoyable as we were able to watch both at the same time – well sort of. Still, it was great to see the running rugby that all four teams tried to execute. The Waihou v Thames game was very hard fought, but it was played in a stop start way. The Cobras Mercury Bay game seemed to be a little one sided. Early picks from me for the final are Waihi v Cobras – but it is indeed very early in the 2024 “Senior A” competition. Have a great week and catch you hopefully somewhere next week.

Coach Bob.

Two of our former players have sadly recently passed away –

They are - Ernest Philip Fathers #692 and Christopher Maraku Cribb #703. We send our love to their families and friends.

Ernie played 6 games as a fullback in 1979 while Cribby played three games as a lock in 1983.

EP played for Paeroa West and Cribby played for Paeroa Old Boys.

A blast from the past....

Family Representatives for Thames Valley.

Three generations of a family:

Costello N (Ned) Patetonga (fullback) 1926. (1 game).

I.J. (Ian). Plains South (Prop) 1960. (1 game).

G.R. Dalgety, Ngatea (First Five) 1983 – 1984, 1989 - 1993. (36 games)

Fisher T (Trevor) Kerepehi (forward) 1950 (2 games).

M.J. (Murray) Hauraki North (Fullback) 1979. (2 games).

M.A. Mathew) Hauraki North (Halfback). 2015 - 2016, 2018 – 2019. (21 Games).

Millington J (Jack) Kerepehi/Patetonga (forward).1923. (3 games).

J.K.(Ken) Hauraki North/ Thames HSOB (Fullback) 1949 - 1950, 1952. (5 games).

D.K. (Keith) Hauraki North/Thames HSOB (Fullback). 1976 - 1983. (37 games).



Clark A.B. (Brian) Patetonga/Hauraki North (Flanker). 1953 – 1956, 1958, 1960. (40 games).

G.A. (Gary). Hauraki North (Wing). 1973 – 1974, 1981. (23 games).

B.A. (Brendon left). Hauraki North (First Five). 2006 – 2007. (17 games).

Dillimore* C. (Charlie). Waihi City/Mataura. (Five eighth). 1924, 1928, 1929. (6 games).

C. (Claude) Waihi Mataura/Waihi Convent Old Boys (5/8) 1931, 32. (5 games).

R.C. (Rex) Waihi Athletic. 1962. (Wing) 1962. (1 game)

***NB. Claude Dillimore was born in 1910 so he was 21 when he played his first Thames Valley game while his dad (Charlie) was 46 - two years before when he played his last game.**

Brendon Clark also played for Pukekohe.



A newspaper clip from the local paper from a few years ago.

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The actors

These three Thames Valley representative rugby players are performing an act which should have happened on Saturday afternoon, September 10, after the thrashing of Horowhenua at Waihi — hoisting high the National Mutual third division championship rosebowl.

But at that time the team did not know there was a trophy to go with the honour of winning the championship.

The Valley team had its final end-of-season function on the Sunday after the last game and also the official photo was taken.

Early last week news that there was a trophy to go with the championship filtered through to the Thames Valley secretary Janice Hazelwood and finally she got it from Poverty Bay, the last holders. The rosebowl arrived on Wednesday.

In the meantime the sponsor's advertising agents wanted a photo of the victorious Valley captain, Irvine Campbell, being chaired from the field with

the rosebowl held high — they did not realise Valley had completed its programme.

A Hamilton photographer was commissioned on Wednesday to take the photo and on Thursday Mrs Hazelwood had to hastily arrange for Irvine and two other players to be at the Domain at 5 p.m. There was a deadline in Wellington of Friday for the photo.

Irvine Campbell made it, as did Ray Silvester, but the Valley match centenary Kevin Handley was working out of town. Other senior members of the side who lived locally were tied up with milking, so it was halfback Mike Tarry, a regular member of the side, a reserve for the last game, who filled the position.

"You've got to look as if you have just had a hard game and are coming off the field," stated the photographer.

So dirt from the Domain renovations were rubbed on jerseys, faces and knees, water slashed through the hair to produce the sweaty appearance and then on with the show.

Irvine was hoisted high — running repairs had to be done on the bowl to keep it and the base together — no trouble for Ray to carry the weight but Mike was struggling a little, while Irvine had an uneven seat.

But like the Valley team of the season, there was great spirit, a will to succeed, and the trio must receive top marks for show.

Had there been a stage talent scout lurking in the fast gathering darkness a contract most surely would have been signed!

Sewer check

A video camera has been used to check the infiltration of storm water into Paeroa Borough's sewer main in the Taylor's Avenue-Hill Street area.

The engineer, Dick Strange, told the recent council meeting that initial checks on the video tape indicates an abnormal flow in the Hill Street area.

He said a further detailed check of the tape, and connections were still to be made to locate sources of entry to the mains.

"I am still hopeful of cutting down the infiltration," he said.

FABERS

SPRINGFIELD 5 PCE BEDROOM SUITE



5-piece bedroom suite. Finished in rich walnut foil laminate. Features: 16 large drawers, colonial queen size headboard and matching mirror. Very serviceable bedside cabinets.

The article appeared in the Paeroa Gazette on Tuesday 4th October 1988. Captain Irvine (Butch) Campbell is being held aloft by the late Mike Tarry and Ray Silvester. Current Thames Valley President Ross Cooper and Centurion Brian Duggan were the coaches of this wonderful Valley side. It has been stated that their victory over a full-strength Counties side in Ngatea which made headlines all over New Zealand was one of the very best performances ever by the union – Third Division v First division. The victory set the team up for their 1988 National Championship win with an amazing attacking style of free flowing rugby. It was a great year for the Thames Valley Union in 1988. Many legends of Thames Valley played for that team as well and their pack was huge, experienced, and able to deliver ball on a plate for their attacking and very skilled backline.

A report from the front office at TVRFU.....

The community game is as strong as it has ever been. Early forecasts show that player numbers across all grades are continuing to rise, resulting in more coaches, managers, and volunteers involving themselves. This provides us with challenges, albeit good ones, with more teams in each competition, more coaches needing upskilling, and possible field availability issues. There are a lot of programs and initiatives that we deliver, that a lot of people do not know about – please find below some highlights from the last month:

Women & Girls:

- We hosted Tiki Edwards (Maori Rugby Lead) from New Zealand Rugby to host a teenage girl's workshop at the Paeroa Domain two week's ago. Fourteen girls attended and thoroughly enjoyed both the on and off-field learnings.
- Maggie Coggor-Orr (Women's Referee Manager) also from New Zealand Rugby attended a Women's & Girls Introduction to Refereeing evening at Paeroa College last week. We had 12 females attend, each of them wanting to become active referees in the Thames Valley. Positive signs ahead!
- The Club of Origin Women's Competition format is about to be finalised. Early indications show 6 Clubs will participate, with the start date to be Sunday 30th June.

Junior Rugby:

- Over the last two weekends, there have been 10 separate Junior Rugby festival days spread across all Clubs within the Thames Valley province. Aimed at giving players a more 'participation based' start to the season, there are no points tables or recorded results at these festivals days. Feedback from the Clubs has shown that this has helped them significantly getting organised prior to the upcoming school holidays.
- Primary School Visits have now also commenced. These sessions are aimed at providing tackle safety and game awareness.
- We have two upcoming holiday camps on Tuesday 16th April (Thames) and Thursday 18th April (Whangamata) for girls and boys aged 10-14. These are action packed days requiring all staff – with over 140 kids expected to attend over the two days.

Secondary Schools:

- With the influx of numbers in the Secondary School space, it has been decided that we will split the previous Youth Year 9/10 Boys grade to two competitions. In 2024, we have an U14 $\frac{3}{4}$ (5 teams) and U15 $\frac{1}{2}$ grade (4 teams). These specific competitions have been designed to create quality meaningful competitions which are fit for the participant's purpose.
- The newly created U18 Boys competition will be a 6-team competition, the 1st XV Girls Competition will have 5-teams, and the Youth Girls (Year 9/10) 4-teams.
- Secondary School 7s in Whitianga on March 27th was a massive success, resulting in 19 teams taking to the field across three grades. Congratulations to Paeroa College who won

the Youth Boys, Hauraki Plains College in the Open Girls, and Matamata College in the Open Boys.

- The Future Skulks player development program captured 22 secondary school players an opportunity to upskill their game prior to the upcoming season. Delivered over four weeks on Monday afternoons, players were exposed to strength and conditioning, individual skills, ball carry and tackle techniques, game awareness and a number of other components.

Club Rugby:

- There have been several close results within the opening rounds of both the Premier and Senior B Competitions. This is a credit to ALL clubs who appointed coaches early, recruited players and had well organised pre-season campaigns. I believe this was well supported by the TVRU Club Road Show late last year.
- The HUDL video analysis league-exchange has been extremely beneficial for each of our eight men's premier Clubs. The league exchange allows all matches to be shared across all teams – supporting coaches, players, referees to review and reflect on individual and team performances.
- Scott Penney and I attended a National Club Rugby Health seminar in Wellington. It will be great to take this information back to our Clubs and work on a plan to support them. This included several presentations from other PU's who shared the great initiatives they have delivered and also guidance from NZR.
- As you will see on social media, there are a lot of great things happening throughout our Clubs and we look forward to sharing more great stories with you.

Other mentions:

- Congratulations to Dali Tui who refereed his 100th Senior Rugby fixture last Saturday. He is the true epitome of a Rugby volunteer.
- We are in the process of confirming Representative Rugby coaching appointments and fixture lists for the 2024 season.
- We are hosting more coach-development opportunities for people of all abilities. This includes a seminar for Premier/1st XV Coaches on Monday 29th April 6.30pm at the TVRU Office and a Foundation Level 1 Coaching course for Women and Junior Rugby in May (separate courses - dates TBC).



Regards from the front office team.

A Thames Valley team from our past!



The Thames Valley team, 1975

Back row: Graham Bax, Ian Taylor, Miles O'Dwyer, Colin Barlow, Kevin Murray, John Corbett, John Arnott, Brian Swindail, Mike Rabarts,

Middle row: Des Johansen [selector], Dave Parfitt, Peter Slavich, Paul Murphy, Murray Hill, Peter Fagan, Roy Tyack [Assistant coach].

Front row: Brian Duggan, Mr Kay McGlynn [manager], Phil Sheehan [captain], John Hodge [vicecaptain], Wayne Crooks, Bernie Passau [chairman], Kevin Fathers.

Absent: Brian Corbett, Terry McGuire, Don Stevenson, Brian McCollum.

Sometimes we achieve something very special:

Thames Valley 9 - Waikato) 6

Since the Waikato and Thames Valley Unions were established in 1921 and 1922 respectively, they have played each other 74 times. Waikato, by far the larger union, have won 64 of those matches, Thames Valley eight with two draws. Because Valley wins did not come that often they were therefore that much more valued.

One of those wins came in 1973 on the Paeroa Domain, the 7th game of the Valley's 11 match programme. The results were close, a converted try and penalty to two penalties but as the Valley players no doubt said, "A win's a Win". With four wins from their 11 matches Thames Valley saw their season as reasonably satisfactory. Wins over Waikato, N Z Services, and a spirited showing against Auckland (lost 12 – 17) were the highlights. The sole selector D F Johansen used only 27 players, with 13 playing in at least nine of the 11 matches.

Three players "World Famous in Thames Valley" were key member of the Swamp Foxes that season. Lock and captain **John Hodge** represented the Valley from 1958 to 1977 in 135 matches, 77 of them consecutive. He also appeared for the Barbarians and captained Counties-Thames Valley against the 1971 Lions.

Halfback **“Tuk” Sheehan** was in his second season for Thames Valley whom he went on to represent in 101 games, finishing in 1986. He also played for NZ Juniors in 1974, Counties-Thames Valley against the 1977 Lions and some invitation XVs.

Five eight **Brian Duggan** played 143 matches for Thames Valley 1970-84, appeared against both the 1971 and 1977 Lions and in some of the invitations matches that were played at the time. It is a pity that the current highly structured first-class programme does not allow for such matches and the opportunities they gave to acknowledge long serving players and give exposure to emerging talent.

Try scorer for Thames Valley that day was wing Ray Garrett who made 18 appearances for the union over two seasons. As a referee he officiated in 26 first class fixtures 1983 – 1996. The Waikato team put out against Thames Valley was probably not the strongest it fielded during the season. Nevertheless, it included All Black George Skudder, North Island representatives in halfback Doug Phillips and hooker Joe Wright and a few experienced provincial players. They probably left Paeroa that day feeling “We should have done better.”

A couple of absolute legends of All Black Rugby.



I had the pleasure of talking to current Valley President Ross Cooper the week after Easter in Te Aroha at the Waihou v Thames game. He shared with me some memories about his time with the All Blacks. Two of the best players for him were the late Jonah Lomu and Captain Sean Fitzpatrick. Of course, Ross had quite an influence on Jonah’s All Black journey first having him play in his counties rugby team in 1994. He told me he tried to get Jonah to play for his counties’ side in 1993 while he was still at Wesley College, but his school principal, Chris Grinter, would not agree to release him, While Fitzy was absolutely without doubt a superb captain, especially on that great All Black tour in 1996 of South Africa. That team won the first ever series win over South Africa in South Africa. Ross described that tour as the absolute pinnacle of his long coaching career and these two players were some of the very best ever to play the game of rugby in the world.

Sean Fitzpatrick's amazing winning record.

Auckland

- National Provincial Championship 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996
- Ranfurly Shield 1995, 1996

Blues

- Super Rugby 1996, 1997

New Zealand

- World Cup 1987
- Bledisloe Cup 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997
- Tri Nations 1996, 1997
- British & Irish Lions series victory 1993.
- International record for most consecutive test matches (63 successive Tests between 1986 & 1996).
- International team record for most consecutive tests without defeat (23 test matches between 1987 and 1990).



Brett Ranga (Thames Valley #1092) in full attack mode in Taupo for the New Zealand Heartland team as their captain and obviously Thames Valley a few years ago. He is now back playing for Waihi this year and has made himself available for selection for the Thames Valley side. He played for Waihi in their game against North at Waitakaruru in their one-sided victory over Hauraki North in round two.

Former COBRAS, Thames Valley (#797), Otago, Highlanders, and All Black **Carl Hoefft** jumping quickly to secure the ball against Natal in 1994. His career finished with 31 All Black matches, all but one of them tests. In addition, he made 37 appearances for Thames Valley, over 70 for Otago, 98 for the Highlanders and won NPC titles with Thames Valley (3rd Div. 1995) and Otago.

