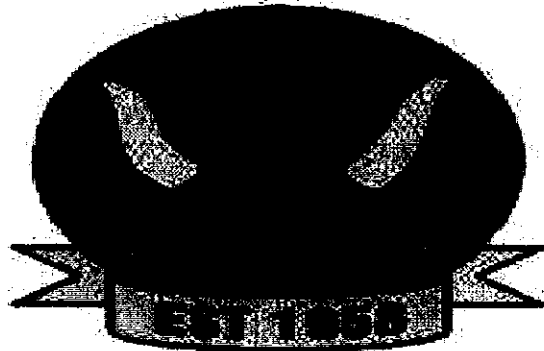


**VIKINGS  
RUGBY CLUB**



**VIKINGS RUGBY CLUB INC.**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been an interesting year at Vikings depending on your point of view. Some say it was terrible, wearing, and demotivating long season. As President I am of the opinion we had many successes however our results on the field were a very low ebb in our history. Despite this, our core playing group stayed committed and improved their skill levels.

The committee set itself challenges before the season kicked off. Number one was asset improvement being our field and the club house. Through the efforts (most of it planned, some say the fire was a master stroke) of some key people, the field now has irrigation and if anyone has visited the club lately the field/grass is first class. The grounds committee tell us it will be even better before the start of next season. The field will be moved and new goal posts installed. Goal kickers will be sad to see the goal post height reduced slightly but the forwards will have their attention clearly set on the try line wondering what the fuss is all about.

The club house kitchen has been upgraded. With these two assets improved, our ability to increase much needed income is set. The income is to partially fund the next stage of the plan for Vikings.

The third asset is our people in the Junior, Senior and Longhorn ranks.

Vikings today has very strong juniors. Well done to the hard working people involved in the juniors. Playing numbers are the best in decades. The results on the field were excellent with every team making the finals and one team going all the way. Well done to the senior club for all the players who helped the junior club. Your efforts are very much appreciated and will play an important role as these young people become members of the senior club.

In the Golden Oldie ranks the Longhorns group are very active both on and off the field. The Ron Lawson (Club Life Member) memorial day was the highlight of the year with many past players, some say legends, treading the turf. The heart of the club thumped hard that Saturday afternoon showing respect to great men as only we could.

There was debate raging when the new committee started about unifying the club. The committee has decided we need time to consider the debate. What we have noticed there is a disconnect between the juniors, seniors and Longhorns. Lots of people do not know each other. The committee is yet to piece together this puzzle. Everyone knows we need to be a unified club. It needs to happen, but how? We know each part will be better off by being connected. The juniors would love to see past legends at training and functions. Longhorns have already experienced the enthusiasm of junior player's parents turning up to a Golden Oldie Gala day at Kiama. We need juniors to transition to the senior club playing ranks onto legend status and then to heaven playing for the Longhorns. Well what else do they do in heaven? We have challenges and we need help from each part to make this become a possibility to grow all aspects of the club.

The controversial decision to axe third grade was a whole of club decision not taken lightly. The committee asked the club to set a clear task of how many players were required to have three teams. The club came back with 58 players as the bare minimum to have three teams. It was clear, one less and we would axe third grade. One week before the start of the season the tally was taken, many people were rung, the dead line extended, and still we only mustered 40 players who could commit to training and playing and a further 8 who could commit to all games because of work commitments from time to time.

This started the recognition that Vikings had huge issues and that they were real. Vikings had many "hung over" issues. Poor numbers at training, poor support for team managers, players turning up when they felt like it after numerous phone calls each and every weekend, committee people doing all the work, club moral low, fractured approach to the whole club, and coaches who felt lonely trying to bring about change.

To complete the picture and the reasoning, one lone loyal 3<sup>rd</sup> grader challenged the decision before the season started and tried to rally players to show we could have third grade or at least a social 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team. A meeting time was set to show support for third grade and would you believe it, one person turned up to the meeting. Opinions may be well considered but at the end of the day it is about actions.

The decision to axe third grade as judged by the players and committee was required and has set the platform for next season. Be sure the same rules will be in place for the upcoming season. If you want to play even one game for the year please make sure you register and pay before the season starts.

Why did we see axing 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as a successful move? Average player numbers at training each week were nearly double the previous year even though this year we only had two teams. We had strong reserve numbers every week for every game. At the end of the season we still had strong numbers at training even though we had only won one game all season in firsts.

The social committee exceeded the requirements set for the club. The social committee was tasked with making sure we set a new standard in the number, type and quality of functions held for the season. Well done to the social committee as your contribution added to keeping the club functioning given the continuing poor results on the field.

The canteen as normal operated smoothly largely to the efforts of a few. We will see some changes next year with more club members being called upon to contribute to lessen the load.

Lastly a lot of players improved their standard of play. With extra talent coming next season and the dedication shown by the current clubmen, we will see Vikings performance turnaround. We were able to realise we had problems, real issues and now lots of people are doing something about it. People are acting. Players want to play for the club.

I would like to thank the 2009 players and the coaching staff for the season. You have done yourselves proud. You have played an important part in setting Vikings up for the coming season. Train hard and prepare for an exciting 2010 season. The plan is to have three grades. The plan is to win games. The plan is to unite the club. More people than ever are doing their part to revive Vikings.

2010 is going to be exciting as many people are pulling together to make Vikings a real force on and off the field. Key players are returning which is making it easy to attract new players. It is important if you are reading this is to get involved and help. Everybody has a role to play. The new coaching staff are highly respected and motivated.

Get on board to help transform Vikings. It is too easy to sit on the fence. Come on you can help. Do it, if nothing else become a sponsor. Turn up to our first home game next season and see the difference. Feel it.

Kyle Page

Vikings President

## Head Coach Report 2009 Season

2009 represented not only Vikings 52<sup>nd</sup> year in the Illawarra District Rugby competition, but an opportunity to build on the previous year. Unfortunately things did not get off to a good start with the committee unable to appoint a coach as our pre season got underway. With this situation I found myself in a caretaker role, finding myself officially appointed to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade role only weeks before the beginning of the season.

Despite all this I did have great optimism for the season ahead. Numbers were strong early in pre season and new faces were aplenty. However with the lack of a figurehead as the start of the season approached it became increasingly obvious that players were already losing interest and enthusiasm. With this in mind and the lack of commitment from lower grade players in previous years, the call went out – either we had 60 registered players by mid March or we would pull 3<sup>rd</sup> grade from the competition. With little feedback the tough decision was made that we would enter 2009 with 2 grades. Let me confirm now why we made this decision. Many were under the impression that we wanted to make 2 “Super teams”. This is not the case. The following reasons were amongst many as to why we took this approach:

1. Numbers were very low and we would have struggled to field 3 teams as the season progressed
2. Many lower grade players of recent years have shown little commitment to the club in respect to training, playing and paying fees
3. Huge effort and energy was put into ensuring 3<sup>rd</sup> grade stayed afloat. We were expending many of our efforts and resources on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade when our focus should be the success of our higher grades.
4. Developing competition for positions amongst players.

With these points in mind, I believe that the right decision was made and that the decision was therefore a success.

As the season progressed it became increasingly obvious that while the effort was being made on the field many players were struggling to maintain the intensity that is required to be competitive in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade competition. Many games saw us within reach with 20 minutes to go, only to find ourselves 30 points behind come games end.

With over half the season gone I found myself wondering if we would manage a victory at all during the season and break our horrid run. Gladly I can say it came in a come from behind victory against University. The ball proceeded this occasion and didn't it make for a wonderful night.

Many things will need to take place in the future to ensure our club is a success. I could write pages of areas for improvements but if I were to sum it up in one sentence it would be - Attitudes of players, coaches and the committee need to become more professional. Everyone who has been involved in season 2009 has made mistakes. I just hope that we as individuals learn from those mistakes so that in years to come we can look back on this time and reflect positively on the lessons we learnt.

Many positives did occur this year that I would like to touch on. Firstly our social committee did a fantastic job in organising wonderful and successful nights such as Italian Night, Fresher Night, The Ball, Poker Night and Ladies Day. The relationship between Juniors and Seniors continues to build with Grade players assisting coaching Junior teams throughout the year. Our fees collection was the best it has been in several years despite the loss of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Finally the development of many talented young players who made their debut in 1<sup>st</sup> grade this year.

I would again like to thank the many people who have supported me throughout the season. Kyle Page and the Vikings committee. Hector Frigo who is the best Manager a coach could ask for - Reliable, trustworthy and oh so honest!! Josh Devitt for your wonderful efforts in coaching 2<sup>nd</sup> grade – I couldn't have done it without you! Josh Moran for doing a fantastic job as 2<sup>nd</sup> grade manager. Phil Green for taking over when I was unavailable to coach. To many of the players – thankyou for your commitment and effort during our 52<sup>nd</sup> season.

Congratulations to the Vikings Juniors who continue to grow in depth and number. All age groups were extremely competitive this year, with all teams making the semi finals for the first time in the clubs history. A special mention must go to our Mighty U12s who won their Grand final 17 – 15 in a thriller against Kiama.

Finally I would like to wish everyone involved in the club all the best for the future. I look forward to seeing the club grow from strength to strength in the coming years. I wish Phil Green and his coaching staff for 2010 all the best for the coming year. I am excited by the prospect of old faces returning to don the sky blue jersey and remain excited about continuing my involvement with the club.

Cheers,  
Fish

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Report 2009

There was both a combination of positive and negative aspects for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in the 2009 season, with the end result (wooden spoon) not reflecting the boys' effort and enthusiasm. We need to build on the positives and learn from the negatives.

The positives were, firstly, the two wins achieved over University and Bowral. The win over University was especially pleasing as it was a tight game against a quality University team. This game was during the first round of the competition and gave belief and confidence to the team.

In every game we play the boys always put in 100% effort and defended their line with pride. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade were competitive in every game we played. On a handful of occasions the boys went down only in the final 10 minutes of the game. This was evident in the game against Camden at Camden, who ended up winning the competition, where the boys only lost by four points. Although we lost, the controlled aggression and effort by every player made it one of the most enjoyable games of the year to watch.

There were a number of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders who stood out and were rewarded with being asked to play 1st grade. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade have a lot of up and coming players who have the ability to play 1st grade. I think the club needs to implement a 'buddy' system where, for example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade prop can liaison with the 1<sup>st</sup> grade prop before every training session and talk about the game ahead and any advice that can be passed on.

The negative factors included attendance and effort at training. Often we were unable to work on backline combinations and forward drills because of a lack of players. When training was positive and productive this often reflected during the game, and when we stuck to the game plan and could beat any team on our day.

I would like to thank Nath Ryan, Toby Dawson and Andrew Wilson for their help and guidance as captains this year, Josh Moran as manager and a big thanks to Tim Fisher for his support as first grade coach.

Josh Devitt

## **SECRETARY REPORT**

The author entered into his second year as club secretary for 2009 and would like to thank the committee for their time and efforts for the year.

Whilst the on-field success of the club was below expectations, plans are already underway for the 2010 campaign and the committee is pleased to announce Phil Green and Jay Tregonning as 1<sup>st</sup> grade coaches.

Special mention is to be made to Craig Walton and his efforts in providing the most successful social calendar of events in recent memory. In particular the staging of Poker Night had to be seen to be believed!

Looking forward to seeing all club members back on board next year.

Geoff Devitt

2009 Club Award and Milestones.

2ND GRADE

BEST BACK – Adam Hatfield  
BEST FORWARD – Dan Zammit  
PLAYERS PLAYER – Josh Graham

1ST GRADE

BEST BACK – Chris Nanasi  
BEST FORWARD – Simon Watts  
PLAYERS PLAYER – Paul Fisher

CURTIS LANE MEMORIAL TROPHY

BEST DEFENSIVE PLAYER

- Mitchell Wakeford

BEST ATTACKING PLAYER

- Chris Nanasi

ALAN GREEN MEMORIAL TROPHY –

U21 PLAYER OF THE YEAR –

- Simon Longhurst

BEST NEW PLAYER –

- Dave McIntosh

100 GAMES

Geoff Devitt

200 GAMES

Joe Sigabalavu  
Graham Stevens

BEST SUPPORTER

- Abby Scott

CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR

- Mitchell Wakeford

ILLAWARRA TRAIN ON SQUAD 2010

Under 20's – Caleb Rae, Travis Thickpenny

Seniors – Paul Fisher, Mitch Wakeford, Nick Fischer