

Annual reports – 2009/10

Senior section – Iain Wilson

A new year, a new head coach, more new faces and more new ideas. This season was one that I think most people would just have been happy to have finished in mid-table and really go for it next year. Well, as it turned out for the first team it was a season where we went in to the last game of the year needing to win to get in to the play off's for promotion. Unfortunately that did not happen but it had been another roller coaster ride as a member of Sidcup Rugby Club.

As for the rest of the club, well I think we stood out! With our 2nd team finishing 3rd in the league for the 3 year running winning 13 of their 20 games. And many of the guys from the 2nd team coming through and playing for the first team which is always a good thing. Our 3rd team had a harder season than last year playing against many 2nd teams we made a fight of every game. Finishing 8th in the league a hard fought season was over with a lot of the club's younger players getting good experience in senior rugby. The 4th team, with their league structure changing half way through the year, ended up picking up 2 league trophies finishing top of both leagues. This was all as a result of a lot of hard work from the 2nd team coach and manager as well as the 3rd and 4th team captains; it shows that with some hard work, a lot of phone calls being made, we can get 4 teams out regularly which is something we have struggled to do over the past few years. So a massive thank you to those guys who make the phone calls and work hard all year.

So to the first team, a relatively good start to the season was then ruined by a poor run that saw us lose 5 games on the spin. Games which would come back to bite us come the end of the year. November rolled round and a lovely little trip down to Chichester, a good win 13-9 with a last minute try turned our season around. We then went on an unbeaten streak of 14 games only for our hard fought opportunity to be lost with a nail biting game down at Dover. Had we won that we would have been in the playoff. But it was not to be and that was the end of a very good season that I don't think anyone saw coming.

On a social side of things, we put on a few things throughout the year and they were well supported, with the highlight being the "Race Night" which raised money for the whole club. There will be a few more things going on this year so please come and support them and help keep the club pushing forward.

To finish with I would like to say good-bye to a few people that have put a lot of hard work in over the past year. The first being Dave Price who tells me that he is stepping down as 3rd team Captain. Also to Darian Uys the outgoing Head Coach who is off to Bracknell and a few first team players are off to pastures new as well, with Jonny West and Sam Eydmen off to try their luck in the National League, Alex Tompkins and Jack Hague who both head off to Uni and Richard Pilgrim who is moving to the other side of London. I am sure I am missing a few more and if I have I do apologise. Good luck to you all next season just remember, don't become strangers.

I hope you all enjoy your summer off and see you all either on the field or in the bar at some point during the next season.

Willisy

Youth section – Richard Cato

Membership within the youth section has risen this season, particularly across the Minis squads. The Minis went on their traditional tour which was considered a great success. Notwithstanding the current economic pressures, three teams from the Junior section were also able to tour.

This season saw us centralise the coaching in the U17s and older youth ages groups under the leadership of Chris Jones. This has been viewed as a successful experiment and will be continued into the new season under Andy Hind's guidance. Our warm thanks are extended to Chris for his energy, conviction and support.

The Mini's, Junior's and Colt's sections all end the season with a positive bank balance.

Richard

Colts – Chris Jones

A very mixed season.

A definite improvement in infrastructure and hopefully the beginnings of a sustainable environment for the continuing movement of players from the Junior section into the Senior section. Problems occurred at the start of the season through poor communication regarding coaching/management structure which impacted negatively on the integration of the U18s into the setup. Perhaps moving forward there needs to be some clarification as to who is responsible for making decisions regarding the coaching/management structure of the Colts and who should be circulating this information. However as the new Colts setup is now about to start its third year and is becoming part of the natural framework of the club maybe there won't be a need to address this.

This year we entered three competitions;

National Colts Cup/Plate:

Knocked out in 1st round of Cup by Guildford who were very strong and progressed to the later stages of the Cup.

Knocked out in the 4th round of the Plate (we received walk overs in first three rounds!) by Richmond who went on to win the plate.

KentUu18 Cup:

A poorly administered competition disintegrated due to teams pulling out and the weather. There was also a major structural concern caused by Kent RFU seeding the competition and not making this explicit. We were inadvertently playing in a "B team" competition without knowing it. This is being addressed by next year's Colts management.

Kent U17 Festival:

We entered a mixed U16/U17 side as a development tool for next season. All players enjoyed equal game time and although we lost every game because of this we made big strides in bringing together the two groups of players for next season.

This all sounds like doom and gloom so far! But the simple fact is that we weren't able to translate

the amount of talent we had available into our performances on the field. To me this comes down to the attitude of the players towards their rugby. Each season's Colts have differing attitudes and commitments to their rugby and unfortunately this year our very talented U18s put rugby very low down on their agenda and not once in the season can I recall us training as a team. As far as I am concerned this is fair enough but it meant that we did not have the success we have had over the previous few seasons with other U18 age groups. To make the point, the week before our first Kent Cup game we had only one U18 at training on Wednesday night. Hopefully a new coaching/management team will have the time to influence the u18s attitudes that this years coaching/management team did not.

The U 17s have shown themselves to be very committed to training and keen to develop as players, I would predict a far more motivated group of players to emerge next season, who will hopefully do the necessary amount of training to fulfil their considerable potential on the pitch.

The U 21s had a successful year almost beating Kent U20s, beating Medway in a development fixture and Heathfield & Waldron in an end of season friendly. Also a Sidcup XV containing mainly U21s with a "spine" of senior players comfortably beat Greenwich University in a warm up fixture for the University in late September.

We introduced a Performance Coach, Jon Rhodes, to the squad last season. Jon ran regular voluntary Monday night sessions for those motivated players educating them in how to improve their strength and conditioning.

Our end of season feedback session has brought up a raft of new ideas for next season including pre-season friendlies, a tour, physios on match days, training with senior players on a Tuesday night, some "old school" Sundays with training sessions preceding matches and us hosting an early season festival with other clubs. All these projects are supported by the new coaching/management structure for next season.

On a personal note I hope to leave the Colts section with the infrastructure in place to begin to give the necessary care and attention to what I feel is the most important side in the club, outside of the 1st/2nd XVs, and to produce the next generation of Sidcup senior players, filling 1st XV to 4th XV or maybe even a 5th XV! I still personally believe that the Colts section should be run and managed as a separate programme from the Junior section.

I would like to personally thank Iain Wilson, Trevor Martingell and Martin Leamon for their support in coaching the side this year, plus the work done on Mondays by Jon Rhodes and a massively debt of gratitude to Kath O'Brien and Charlie Pooley who have done an incredible amount of work behind the scenes as managers to organise and mobilise the troops in what has been a very challenging season.

Good luck to Andy and his coaching team and managers for next season, I firmly believe that they will be able to take the team and the section above and beyond what I was able to achieve.

Chris