



104th ANNUAL REPORT AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2023

**NEW PLYMOUTH OLD BOYS' RUGBY
FOOTBALL & SPORTS CLUB**



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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given of the 104th Annual General Meeting of the New Plymouth Old Boys' Rugby Football & Sports Club – to be held in the clubrooms, Vogeltown Park, Carrington Street, on Monday 6 November 2023 at 7 pm.

AGENDA

- 1) Welcome and Notice of Meeting
- 2) Apologies
- 3) Obituaries/bereavements
- 4) Minutes of last AGM
- 5) Matters Arising from previous minutes
- 6) Chairman's report
- 7) Sponsorship report
- 8) Team reports
- 9) Performance Report
- 10) Election of Officers
- 11) General business



OFFICE HOLDERS 2023

Patron:	S. Moore		
President:	G. White		
Senior Vice President:	N. Barnes		
Vice Presidents:	R. Sleep M. Topless B. Wood I. Anderson	G. White B. Sutton P. Darney K. Armstrong	R. Lilley S. Roylance K. Mawson
Honorary Vice Presidents:	G. Earl B. Gould B. Davis P. Saunders	D. Lean W. Williams P. O'Neill J. Mitchell	P. Morrison G. Lilley
Life Members: *denotes deceased	R. J. Muir* R. A. Roper* Mrs S. Mitchell* J. W. Bennett*	A.C. Read N. Barnes G.C. Earl P.J. Morrison	R. Sleep M. Carr A. Slater P. Darney
Honorary solicitor:	C. Hart		
Board Members	Chairperson:	S. Cloke	
	Secretary:	Y. Preston	
	Treasurer/Finance:	L. McBride	
	Club Captain:	P. Darney	
	Sponsorship:	K. Mawson	
	Junior Convenor:	J. Looney and B. Morgan	
	Rugby Manager:	Adara Segedin (resigned)	
	Funding applications:	L. French-Wright	
	Marketing and communications:	A. Boslem	
	Facilities:	J. Mitchell	

COACHES AND MANAGEMENT 2023

TEAM	COACHES	MANAGERS
Premier:	A. Slater M. Carr H. Mitchell J. Looney	S. Roylance B. Lilley B. Sutton
Division 1:	M. Harold J. Carrington	T. Landrigan C. Harold
Colts:	R. Lilley M. Guthrie J. Burton D. Stewart	S. Douglas
U85:	Caleb Mawson	Thomas Landrigan Matt Guthrie

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2023 was the season we returned to normal. By the end of the season all COVID restrictions had been lifted, Senior teams returned to the normal 14 week competition with points halved after the first round and Junior competition also returned to a normal season with great success.

The Senior teams all performed well with the BCD Premiers, ALSCO Division 1 and Pepper Construction Colts all making the home semi finals. Unfortunately for the Colts it wasn't meant to be, despite their best efforts the semis saw an end to their season. Premiers and Division 1 took to the field at Yarrows Stadium for the finals which were always going to be hard fought games. Division 1 couldn't hold off the Southern Team, but did the club and themselves proud. The Premiers had an outstanding season with 16 wins from 16 games. They fought hard in the additional 20 minutes of game time on finals day to earn themselves the Premiership win, never has it been more deserving.

The Junior Club saw Blake Morgan taking over from Justin Looney as Junior convenor, a role Blake did superbly well. Putting together the NPOB Child Protection Policy, the first night games under lights, 13 NPOB junior boys made the Ross Brown teams with Blake coaching the North Team, Blake brought back the junior prize-giving at the club complete with trophies and certificates. The Junior girls team sported nice new custom designed jerseys and played well.

The lights finally went in, with a successful lighting launch night where we got to host and thank our lighting sponsors and funders. The lights have been well used for trainings already and will give us a great opportunity to have night games during the 2024 season, bringing more people into the clubrooms and enjoying our facilities.



Our coaches and managers were once again the heroes of the season, with a number going on to coach and manage representative teams: Blake Morgan (coach) and Daryl Seator (manager) Ross Brown North team. Hamish Mitchell and Justin Looney (coaches) Taranaki U19 team. A personal thanks to our Senior and Junior coaches who give hours of their time, not just during the season but also on the lead up to the season, we are incredibly grateful to have had you on board and look forward to seeing those of you next season who have decided to stay on. For those moving onto other endeavours we wish you all the very best.

As always with great coaching and mentoring come great players, once again New Plymouth Old Boys have a number of players who achieved representative status. This year has been a challenge financially for the club. With the lighting project not being finished prior to the start of the season, the board needed to be prudent with our expenditure to be able to cover any over-runs. With the comments coming back already from funders that it will be harder moving forward we will need to keep this front of mind and be as resourceful as possible as we look forward to the 2024 season.

Some of us had the pleasure of attending the New Plymouth Boys High School assembly and presentations to Roy Roper on his 100th birthday, our oldest living life member. Not only was this an honour for those involved, but it really hit home the history and part New Plymouth Old Boys rugby club plays in the community. The Club have been given a book by the Roper family which tells the life story of Roy Roper and his days playing rugby. I hope you all have a look at this when you get the chance and appreciate it as we do.

To the board; Thank You.

You have all worked hard behind the scenes, supporting and helping wherever you could to ensure the season was a success. It wasn't the easiest of seasons, as many clubs struggled to field teams and source volunteers, we were not immune. But together we stayed strong and moved forward. With the recent review of our board structure and the work done on creating a strategy and vision for the club, I believe we have the groundwork to move forward and carry the club through. To those board members and lovely extras who have decided to step back we thank you for your assistance, without you we would find some challenges for sure. Keith Mawson once again led the way with sponsorship. Adara Segedin started our season off well as rugby manager and Peter Cowley stepped in to assist on game



days in the latter part of the season. To our secretary Yvette Preston, you are amazing, we only need come up with an idea, hand it to Yvette and she gets the job done. And last but not least, Billy Preston, where would we be without your video analysis and "tech assistance", Billy sourced Primo Wireless for the club and sponsorship to cover his tower, well done Billy.

"Together we are stronger"

Sonia Cloke

BEREAVEMENTS

The club wishes to pass on sincere condolences to all those who lost a loved one this season.

Roy Roper



HIGHER HONOURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

With great coaching and mentoring comes great players. Once again New Plymouth Old Boys have several players who achieved representative status:

Players	Team
Tupou Vaa'i	All Blacks Chiefs Yarrows Taranaki Bulls
Callum Botchar	Canadian National Team Taranaki Development Team
Bradley Slater, Kaylum Boshier	Chiefs Yarrows Taranaki Bulls
Tom Florence	Highlanders Yarrows Taranaki Bulls
Reuben O'Neill	Crusaders Yarrows Taranaki Bulls
Mitch O'Neill, Brayton Northcott-Hill	Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Taranaki Development Team
Michael Loft	Yarrows Taranaki Bulls Taranaki Development Team
Donald Brighthouse	Yarrows Taranaki Bulls
JJ Pokai	Taranaki Development Team, North Harbour Development Team
Jayden Ford, Brodie Lilly, Jordan Roylance, Shaan Waite	NZ Barbarians Under 85
Perry Lawrence	Taranaki Development Team Taranaki Māori
Jack Parker	Buller Taranaki Development Team

Toby Burkhart, Josh Dowsing, Mason Milham, Jackson Morgan, Rowan Slater, Adam Smith, Joel Williamson	Taranaki Development Team
Josh Thompson	Taranaki Māori
Tuterangi Anderson, William Luff	Taranaki Pasifika
Finn Hann, Zak McDonald, Jacob Mitchell	Taranaki U19

SPONSORSHIP REPORT

On behalf of the NPOB Rugby Club I would like to thank all of our Sponsors for their support during the 2023 season. As a Club we are very fortunate to have supportive, long-term sponsors that enables the Club to provide an opportunity for its junior and senior members to play a team sport in a supportive community environment.

The Club commenced a planned lighting project to erect and install new lights on fields 1 and 2 at the end of the 2022 rugby season at a cost of \$220,000. We ran into a few obstacles with the foundations but completed the installation of the new lights a week prior to the start of the season at the end of March 2023. This project would not have been possible without the hard work of the volunteers within the Club and also the generous support of our major lighting sponsors and funders which included PAKn'SAVE, Warren & Claire Bolton, Mark Newman Trust, NZ Community Trust, Toi Foundation, Aoteroa Gaming Trust & the Pelorus Trust.

As a Club we have had continued ongoing annual support from our major sponsors which includes our Club sponsor **PAK'nSAVE**, Premier Team sponsor **BCD Group**, Division 1 Team sponsor **ALSCO NZ**, Colts Team sponsor **Pepper Construction**, Under 85 Team sponsor **Spark Metal Fabrication** and Junior Club sponsor **Mark Newman Memorial Trust**. The Club also received fantastic support from its gear sponsors **Kingsway Menswear**, rugby shorts sponsor **Revital Fertilisers** and official bar sponsor **The Good Home**.

We would like to also acknowledge the support of our Associate Sponsors who provide a range of services and support for the Club: Cheers Digital, Cunningham Construction, DB Breweries, Dobson + Sons Canvas, Engineering Consultants NZ, Kingsway Menswear, Neville Ritson, NZ Community Trust (NZCT), Pelorus Trust, Phoenix Shipping, Physiotherapy@Carefirst, Primo, Radiotalk, Rampage Fitness and Schurr and Ireland Accountants.

A large portion of our sponsorship funds is generated from the Premier Team Player Sponsors and Match Day Sponsors and we would like to thank these sponsors, a lot of whom have been part of the Club for many years: AB Electrical, Andrew Darney Vanburwray, Arika Plumbing and Gas, Chad Niwa Building, Chemwash Taranaki, Corson Tyres, Craig Investment Partners, Crossan Builders, Egmont Seafoods, FMG Insurance, JGP Projects , L A Homes, Legal Solutions – Carrington + Ussher, Luke O'Neill Harcourts, Mangonui Bull Hire, Marsh Limited, McCurdy Trucks, McDonald Everest Insurance Brokers, Metalcraft Roofing, Ritson Holdings, Rob Mason Electrical & Security, Savvygas Plumbing and Drainage, Sterile Welco Engineering Services, TCM Ltd, Timberco, Value Building Supplies, Vogeltown Pharmacy and Warren & Claire Bolton.

The Club had a successful season on and off the playing field and we hope that with the improved facilities and the support that we provide the players and teams that the Club will continue to grow and play an important part in our community.

We encourage Club members to support our sponsors and hopefully they have seen some tangible results from their sponsorship of NPOB Rugby.



SPONSORS

Club Sponsor	Pak'nSave
Junior Rugby Club Sponsor	Pak'n Save Mark Newman Memorial Trust
Premier Team Sponsor	BCD Group Ltd
Senior Division 1 Team Sponsor	Alsco NZ
Colts Sponsor and scoreboard field 2	Pepper Construction
U85 Half Pints	Spark Metal Fabrication
Gear Sponsor	Kingsway Menswear
Shorts Sponsor	Revital Fertiliser
Official Bar	The Good Home
Woman's Team	Team Green Luke O'Neill
Premier Team Jersey Sponsors	AB Electrical Andrew Darney – Vanburwray Arika Plumbing & Gas Chad Niwa Building Chemwash Taranaki Corson Tyres Crossan Builders FMG Insurance L A Homes Marsh Limited McCurdy Trucks McDonald Everest Insurance Brokers Metalcraft Roofing Mangonui Bull Hire Ritson Holdings Rob Mason Electrical & Security Savvygas Plumbing and Drainage Sterile Welco Services TCM Timberco



	<p>Value Building Supplies Vogeltown Pharmacy Warren & Claire Bolton</p>
Match Day Sponsors	<p>Egmont Seafoods Legal Solutions + Carrington Usher JGP Engineering Craig Investments Partners Luke O'Neill – Team Green</p>
Associate Sponsors	<p>Rampage Cheers Digital Physiotherapy@Carefirst Radiotalk Phoenix Shipping Schurr and Ireland DB Brewery Pelorus Trust Cunningham Construction NZ Community Trust (NZCT) Kingswear Menswear Engineering Consultants NZ</p>
Light Tower Sponsors	<p>NPOB Lighting Fund Toi Foundation NZ Community Trust (NZCT) Pelorus Trust Mark Newman Trust Aotearoa Gaming Trust Warren Bolten Pak'nSave BCD Engineering Bland & Jackson Surveyors M Hareb Excavating Rob Mason Electrical & Security Old Boys Concrete Crossan Builders</p>



BCD GROUP PREMIER TEAM REPORT

The 2023 season started with the bulk of the squad returning for the chance to rectify the frustrating loss to Tukapa in the semi-final in 2022.

New additions to the team this year were Justin Looney as assistant Backs coach BIG RED Callum Botchar from Canada, Sam Wiringi div 1 Captain from 2022, non playing due to injury Jordan Roylance , Jayden Ford also but he made a speedy recovery to play a stellar second round.

Our pre-season was a little disrupted with player availability and a few off-season injuries, but the coaching team, management and players were well aligned, organised, and had a good plan in place.

An invitation from the Hamilton Old Boys Club to come and play in their pre-season \$10k tournament was an exciting challenge that the team wanted to take up! With a few players unavailable due to off season injury recovery, and the desire to grow the club culture and encourage the younger players. The call went out to invite a few players from the Div 1 and colts team, which was a great initiative. Coaches Andrew Slater and Hamish Mitchell took control and with the assistance of Billy Preston they made the trip to Hamilton.

The team put in a stellar performance and made it through to the final but with a few bruised bodies and injuries they went down to a very strong Auckland team. I believe the night was celebrated with a few cold ones and a bit of team bonding, involving a little indoor cricket.

A pre-season game against Clifton and a team building day laid a good platform to kick off the season against Stratford on the 1st of April.

The game was a game of two halves with Stratford starting strongly to lead 14-0 at half time but the lads turned in a great second half to win 22-21. Who will ever forget that outstanding conversion from the sideline right on fulltime to secure the victory! You might say, that set the tone for the whole season.

The second encounter required a bus trip to Rahoitu to play Coastal, where a hard fought, scrappy 17-11 victory resulted. Game three was last year's finalist, Clifton. This match set up as a chance to see what level we were at and was envisaged as one of the bigger tests of the first round. The lads put on one of the best performances we have ever produced with a 69-7 thrashing. This was truly a clinical display of attacking flair and defensive ruthlessness. Our fourth match was to be a non-event due to Spotswood defaulting, due to a lack of players but specifically front rowers. It is to be noted and celebrated that Don Brighthouse played for Spotswood in the follow rounds match, so they didn't default for a second time. An unbelievable gesture by Don and a commitment from the Premis to think holistically about



our game. Inglewood was next and sound performance saw a 52-19 win. A bus trip to Hawera followed next to take on Southern and again a good performance resulted in a 44-14 win. The final game for the first was the across town rivals Tukapa at Vogeltown Park. Tukapa has been the bogie team for the last five years, but the lads were confident this year would be different. With a nice dry track, the team again produced another outstanding performance to amass 79 points on them and only concede 12. A scoreline that had many ex-players scratching their heads about if that was the largest score ever recorded against the chooks! This win gave us the McLeod Shield of 1st round winners.

Halving the points and rolling into the second round was the next challenge. The team took it game by game and the results were a win over Stratford 17-5, a 52-17 victory over Coastal and then a good 31-8 win over Clifton. A 50-26 win over Spotswood followed by a 52-21 win at Inglewood and another comprehensive victory of 71-6 over Southern. This just left Tukapa, who by this stage were out of finals contention. The team grafted out a 34-12 victory to end the season unbeaten and take out the Brian Duffy Memorial Cup as the second-round winners.

Semi Finals loomed against Clifton. We played them at home and again every player was focussed, on-task and we secured a 39-7 victory booking a final against an extremely strong and talented Stratford team.

Finals Day was a day that could have played out as a great day for the club with the Div1 team also in their final but unfortunately falling at the last hurdle. The final turned out to be a game of attrition and survival with the half time score of 12 all dragging out to be 12 all at fulltime. Into extra time we go, with the chance to use some of the bench. Finally, we broke through the staunch Stratford defence to seal the win 26-12 and lock the shield away for the year.

With an unbeaten season the lads had plenty to celebrate apart from Daniel Waite as he was driven to Auckland that night so he could fly to Japan the following morning to take up a well-deserved professional contract.

We had a great season and huge thanks goes out to the NPOB Board and committee for all their hard work behind and the scenes, to the other club teams for helping with players and all their support.

To Billy Preston our Video Analyst, whose skill and passion is truly amazing and very important in helping us get the results that we did. No other club team would have been as blessed as us with your technical prowess and innovative technology.

To Nathan our Physio and Andrew Larkin owner of Physiotherapy@carefirst for providing expert knowledge and to keep our players on the field and to patch them up when needed we would be lost without you.



To my management team of Bruzer and Sutte, thanks for all your efforts and time you have given up for the season. There has been a lot of laughs and good times had... as well as some hard work in between!

Finally, a massive thank you goes to the coaching team who gave up their time to build this team. The player buy-in and leadership along with skills and guidance you provided resulted in an exciting and highly effective game plan that produced fantastic results. The passion and drive they have for the club and the game is amazing, so THANKS TO ALL FOUR of you.

See you next year SPUD – WHITE, WHITE, WHITE!!!



ALSCO DIVISION 1 REPORT

The Division 1 side came in to the 2023 season full of confidence after going all the way in 2022. The team were motivated not to rest on their laurels and the goal right from the outset was to go back to back. Inspirational coach & leader Caleb Mawson stepped down at the end of the 2022 season and the unenviable task of following on from his successful tenure was handed to his under-study Matthew Harold. Phil had done an outstanding job with the team since taking over the role and it was just a case of building on the successful platform that had been laid. The Div 1's also lost some key personnel from the champion 2022 side including Dutch International Liam McBride, traitor Caleb Ritai and young Fletcher Burnett.

As is always the case with the Div 1 side, preseason was non-existent and the boys turned up to the first week of training with sloppier rigs than Coach Harold would have liked, and the season got off to a rough start with a 21-12 loss to Stratford, our first home loss since 2019! This was perhaps the wake up call that was needed to get the season on track, as the team went on a run of 4 comprehensive victories against Coastal, Clifton, Spotswood and Inglewood. Up next was the infamous bus trip to Southern and we were greeted with typically atrocious Hawera weather. This game was the debut for NPOB of ex Spotswood superstar Josh Hamilton, who almost individually led us to a famous away victory, however we were to lose to a Southern try on the final deep into injury time.

Trainings throughout the season were kept simple but we just focused on our attack & defensive patterns and ensuring that each player knew where they had to be on the field. Although it was a simple gameplan we stuck to our structure but also had players with the ability to break the game open at any opportunity. We unfortunately lost Sean White, Josh Hamilton, Ratu Stark and Jamayn Kepa to season ending injuries during the second round, however the team went on to record 7 consecutive wins after that disappointing loss to Southern, meaning we would head into the semi-finals at the top of the table. This meant we would be facing a strong Stratford side at Vogeltown Park for a chance to make our fourth final in a row.

Even though the injuries had begun to pile up, the team went in to the semi-finals full of confidence and excited at the prospect of heading back to the big dance. Although the end goal was in sight the leaders stressed the importance of taking it one step at a time.



Stratford started the game strongly using their big ball carriers to make meters up the middle. Old Boys were defending their hearts out but struggled on attack and the penalties were beginning to mount. The match was tight at half time and it was going to take a big 2nd half effort to get the win. It was a courageous effort on defence from the entire side, with second half possession at an 80/20 split in favour of Stratford, and the boys were able to come away with a 17-12 victory.

The boys had achieved the goal of making it to the big dance and we knew we had our work cut out against us playing Southern. Although we had won the prior encounter, Southern were the other form side in the comp so the boys knew that they had to be at their best to win it all. The loss of Back of the Year Cullen Murfitt during the week and Forward of the Year Breyton French the morning of wasn't ideal for preparation, but Coach Harold had faith in the next men up.

The conditions for the final were immaculate as Old Boys ran out to a packed Yarrows Stadium. The first 20 minutes of the final was an even battle, with Old Boys holding out a relentless Southern attack. Injuries to Coach Harold and veteran Jack Carrington meant that yet again, the sideline boys were going to have to step up, but compiling mistakes and poor tackling meant that today wasn't going to be our day. Although it was bitterly disappointing to lose the final 23-12, Southern were the deserved winners on the day.

The Div 1's would like to thank all those people behind the scenes that volunteer their time to ensure we can get out on the field each week.

Special mention must also go to the Premiers who had a fantastic season and ensured that we had something to celebrate on finals day, going undefeated is no easy feat so congratulations!

Lastly to the Div 1 boys, it was an absolute pleasure to be involved with the team again and they have certainly made the transition in to coaching a lot easier. It was fantastic to have several new players join the side this year and special mention must go to Sammy Wiringi, a B's stalwart, who made his debut for the Prem's and was instrumental in their Championship victory. I'd also like to acknowledge Thomas Landrigan, Head Ass Manager who not only aided with the team admin, but chucked on the boots when his number was called and



provided some outstanding plays that will no doubt be talked about at the White House for years to come.

Next year is looking like somewhat of a 'farewell tour' for this group and I've got no doubt that the team will be there at the end competing for the championship. The Div 1's are a great bunch of boys and I think the friendship between the players on and off the field is what has made this side so successful.

"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more." William Shakespeare

Matt Harold – Coach



PEPPER CONSTRUCTION LTD COLTS REPORT

Obviously the goal for our team this year was to win back to back championships after the very good win over Stratford/Eltham last year 33/7. Last year was a shorter intense season and with good numbers we were able to go into practices with good numbers and generally accomplish what we needed at practice. Having good numbers put pressure on players to be at practice and then preform on the field.

So this season began with the news we were back to two full rounds, summer sport had only just finished and our numbers were not what we had the previous season. In reality we only fielded 23 players four times. There is clearly more work to do on recruitment in the future. I have spoken about the long season and numbers and this impacts on team trainings when you only need an injury or two and then a couple working late and then all plans for a productive training can be difficult.

This season Matthew Guthrie joined the coaching team which was a little heavy at the start of the season with Matthew, Dean Stewart, Jeremy Burton and I with Shane Douglas as Manager. However I left halfway through the season on holiday. We finished the first round with 5 wins and a loss to an Inglewood team that had good numbers and were well coached. They won 26/12 and it was clear they were going to be a difficult team to beat next time around.

I guess you could say we were solid through the second round with four wins, another loss to Inglewood 27/13 and a draw with Southern 31/31. So Inglewood was the team to beat but first we had to get past Stratford Eltham in a semi-final – at least it was at home.

Whilst I missed the second round I knew that the injuries to key players Tom Morris (first five) and Regan Gifford (loose forward) would be difficult to cover both from Tom's goal kicking to his leadership in the backs and Regan's follow me attitude.

Stratford Eltham got away to a great start to lead 13/0 at half time. NPOB battled back in the second half not getting any points until the 66 minute with a try to Autahi Anderson, converted by Louie McLachlan and then a further try to Kobe Lucas in the 72 minute to go up 12/10. However we were unable to hold Stratford Eltham out and they kicked a penalty in the 82 minute to win 13/12.

I know the playing and coaching team were very disappointed to bow out at semi-final time but I guess there is always another year next year.



I would like to thank the other two teams for their support during the season and in particular the interest the Premier Coaching Team showed in our players this year. Bad luck with the Division Two final and a well-deserved victory for the Premier Team. Also thanks to the club as a whole for the support of our team this year.

Report prepared by Ross Lilley

Coaches:

Matthew Guthrie, Jeremy Burton, Dean Stewart.

Manager:

Shane Douglas



SPARK METAL FABRICATION U85 HALF PINTS REPORT

The idea for creating an NPOB Under 85s team came whilst sharing a few units at 57 Tukapa Street (Nag n Noggin). A few older heads were keen to get involved and put a team together to compete in the NZ Under 85 Barbarians Cup which Tukapa have been playing in for the past few years. We quickly got a large number of lads from within the club that were keen to play and anyone that was mildly obese was assigned to the coaching/management roles.

Although the majority of team was made up of players from the NPOB Prems, Div 1's & Colts we were able to attract a few players from other clubs to bolster the roster. There were a couple of big name signings made by the coaching group with Wizz Lahmert & Liam Blyde putting their hands up to wear the Black, White & Yellow.

We were mindful of the boys commitments to their respective teams so we just had a few quick sessions before Thursday night trainings to start getting some cohesion within the squad. Mainly having a team of backs it was apparent that we needed a couple of longer sessions especially for the forwards to hit the scrum machine as a couple of the assigned front row boys had no idea what they were doing. We enlisted the help of AB's wider squad member Reuben O'Neill & Vogelstown Sniper to get the boys in to shape at scrum time which can quite often be where games are won and lost.

The first game sprung up on us at the start of May and we travelled down on a Sunday to Whanganui to play the Poneke Wanderers. We didn't really know what to expect with Poneke coming off a 100 point win the previous week in their own comp and also having the Saturday off whilst the majority of our team were backing up from the day before. The pre-game weigh in was probably the highlight of the day with a few of the fat boys having to go for a sauna before kick-off and Jacko Carrington stripping down naked (revealing his underwhelming package) to get under the weight limit. Although a number of the team were malnourished and dehydrated we started the game absolutely belting Poneke every time they carried the ball in contact. Everyone across the park was ripping in but the early defensive effort was led by the talismatic Matt "Ofa" Harold who is probably the first prop



ever to start the game with lifting pads on. The defensive pressure certainly caught Poneke off guard and when we got the ball in hand we were able to capitalise and score some well taken tries. Although we had 17-0 advantage at half time the boys didn't let up in the 2nd half as big tighthead the bash brothers Shannon Waite & Jayden Ford ably supported by big prop Brodie Lilley physically assaulted every Poneke player that carried the ball. We ended up easily winning 38-0 with Blydey crossing for a hat-trick although his terrible hands stopped him from dotting down for more tries.

After the first round win the hype definitely started to build around the team and Fordo went to our primary gear supplier Kingsway to get some personalised half-pints kit for the boys to wear. Now that we looked like a team we thought we'd better train like one as we started to run some Wednesday night sessions to build combinations. Admin man Haz scored a major coup by convincing the NZRU & TRFU to host our 2nd round game against Petone at Yarrows Stadium. Petone were below Poneke in the Wellington Comp so we knew we were a pretty good chance to advance to the next round. We played Petone on Sunday afternoon in mid June and to be honest there isn't really much to talk about regarding the game. We won 82-3 and co-coach Daniel Waite decided to escape to Japan to avoid doing a promised yardy for the boys reaching 80 points.

The next game was against another Wellington opponent in Hutt Old Boys Marist and since we hadn't had a proper away game it was the Half Pints turn to get on the road. With the Taranaki Club Comp already having wrapped up we decided it was best to further enhance the team bonding by staying down in Wellington for the night after the game. Again, it turned in to a bit of a hiding as we ended up winning 72-0 with Wizz barely letting the ball out of his grasp scoring 4 tries. We ended up having the inaugural Half Pints courty in the Cambridge Hotel dungeon and it certainly brought the team closer together. Joe Avery was MVP of the trip for both his on field and off field plays.

We'd reached the quarter final stage of the competition and from here on the NZRU were covering the flights to games for the playing squad and management. The boys wanted the home town advantage and again we managed to convince the NZRU to put forward some cash to get a curtain raiser for the Taranaki Bulls. We were playing our first Auckland team in Grammar Tech and we knew it was going to be a massive step up from the previous games that we had played. The early exchanges were tight and it was clear we were finally in for a battle but the boys were up for it. We scored 3 great first half tries and went in to the break



17-11 up. A brilliant blindside play after half-time extended the lead to 22-11 and we started to switch our minds to playing in a national semi final. However G-Tech scored a full field intercept try when we had a penalty straight in front of the posts and this started an absolute meltdown from the Half Pints. We started to panic throwing loose passes, missing touch and a couple of 50/22's from G-Tech meant they camped down in our area and continued to pile the points on. They ended up scoring 3 converted tries during this 15 minutes of madness and I'd have to say it was one of the bigger chokes that I've been a part of in sport. We scored a consolation try on fulltime but lost 32-27 which was absolutely devastating as we were clearly the better side. Big game pressure took it's toll and I think the easy run in to the quarter final hadn't done us any favours.

It was however a great debut season for the Half Pints and I know everyone is motivated to come back next year to go all the way and win a national title. Big congratulations to Jayden, Shannon, Roylance & Brodie for making the NZ Under 85's paper team and I think we were certainly unlucky to not have more guys in this team. In particular Mase scored tries for fun during all the games and some would probably describe him as a bully with the way he played. Thanks to all the boys, management and the club for making this season happen and I know we will come back with a vengeance in 2024.

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PAK'NSAVE JUNIOR CLUB REPORT

TEAMS: 12 (including 1x girls rugby team).

REGISTERED PLAYERS: 199

2023 saw NPOB continue to maintain steady registrations within the junior rugby space with kids from 4 years up to 13 years old. This allowed the club to participate over all age group competitions. This was also boosted again by being able to accommodate the growing number of girls interested in playing rugby which saw for the second year running a full girls team represented in their respected competition headed by Chris Fenwick and his coaching team.

A special mention to Judda (Justin Looney) as this year he stood down as Junior conveyer at NPOB. This club is built on the commitment, dedication and passion of volunteers and for nearly 10 years Judda has provided this to our club which he steered through many challenges and also many achievements. He has left big shoes to fill and I look forward to continuing and building on the solid foundation he has laid to secure the future of our junior rugby within our club.

With a new set of eyes, this did give us the opportunity to look ahead, take on feedback and look at how we can best support our coaches and players to safe net our future with the likes of other sporting codes growing in popularity. A coaches and managers meeting was organised prior to the commencement of the season to ensure all coaches, managers were on the same page and had the necessary information and equipment needed to get through the season. I believe this allowed an open forum to discuss improvements and how we as a club can prepare and support our volunteers to ensure a successful season. It is a way for us to work with each other to ensure the best outcome for all age groups.

A highlight of the season was the celebration of the new light fixtures at the ground being available for use which allowed us to host night games for multiple junior teams. It was a great turnout and received high praise from many as it not only gave our juniors a new experience playing under the lights but brought in many spectators that usually could not attend on a Saturday morning due to other commitments. This was polished off with the club providing free kids meals to all players which brought lots of whānau to stay behind and experience the "Whitehouse" with a meal and beer in hand.

Both individually and as teams, NPOB punched well above its weight not only within the regular season but also within representative teams and attending tournaments. Both our U11 teams went throughout the season undefeated and also a strong season had for our U9s and one of our U10 teams. The annual New Zealand rugby festival in Taupō was attended by 2 NPOB teams who gained fantastic success with our U11 going undefeated and our U10 coming away with 4 wins and a draw. Our U11s received one of the "teams of the festival" awards and overall, 3 players selected in their respected tournament teams (Indi James &



Jaxon Cantlon U11's & Eli Rawhiti U10's). Our junior players also were well represented within the Ross Brown competition with 15 NPOB juniors representing the club.

Lastly, we were able to reintroduce the end of season junior prizegiving, which allowed us as a club to recognise and acknowledge all our junior players and the growth and hard work they have put in this season. This was broken into two time slots, U6s, U7, U8 and U9s in the morning and U10s, U11, U12 and U13 at midday and it was pleasing to see the Whitehouse filled to the brim with players and whānau with over 200 people through the club. It was great to come together and see all age groups and teams of the same age group interact as one club. Team and club culture is such an important aspect of any organization and to see hundreds of people in our clubrooms support and cheer for each other is truly a wonderful thing that I hope we can continue to do annually.

A big thanks to all the volunteers, committees, whānau who supported junior rugby this year, especially Pak'nSave New Plymouth with your support we were able to feed hundreds of junior kids every Saturday with the donation of sausages bread and player of the day packs.

2023 was enjoyable season for all and we look forward to 2024.

Thanks

Blake Morgan
NPOB Junior Rugby Co-Ordinator

