

Korfball New Zealand
Annual Report for the year to 30 June 2002
Chairman's Report

The year to 30 June 2002 was the fifth since the incorporation of Korfball New Zealand. It has shown steady progress, with a number of memorable highlights.

In summary, we have succeeded in considerably lowering the average age of our player base, have generally improved the overall technical level of our competition and have welcomed the efforts of a number of new people who have been instrumental in the success we have been able to achieve. However, these are all areas where continuing improvement is possible and we should not assume that any particular task in these areas has been completed.

Achievements

Our winter social korfbal competition is at the centre of all our other activities. The competition has been effectively administered by a very able sub-committee of Liesbeth van Bruchem, Ngaire Smith and Ditte Power. Due to an increase in the charges for gym hire levied by Cowles Stadium, it was necessary to increase our competition fees during the 2002 winter, and further increases are likely at the start of 2003 winter. However, we are still able to offer recreational sport at a price per player per play lower than most alternatives – while continuing to make a modest profit from the competition

In our competition, a recurring pattern has been a decline in the number of participating teams during the second half of each winter. This occurred again in the winter of 2001 (the second half of which is in the year under review) and in 2002 (which is outside the reporting period). At the start of the 2002 winter, however, we had 13 teams entered in our competition, which is the highest number so far. The performance of those teams taken over the whole winter saw two teams emerge as clearly stronger than the others – West Coasters and Strawtakers, with a group of around five or six other teams sitting on the next level below these two stronger teams.

We are committed in 2003 to splitting our winter competition formally into two tiers with a view to further improving the level of competition among the stronger teams and guarding against too many one-sided matches. The success of this strategy, however, will depend on our being able to recruit sufficient new players that we have at least six teams in each division of the competition.

Alongside this we will be making a concerted effort to ensure that our standards of refereeing continue to match the technical improvements made by our players. This will be achieved through the introduction of an accreditation process, intended to provide our referees with greater skills and confidence and therefore more consistency across our refereeing base.

An undoubted highlight during the first six months of 2002 was the inclusion of korfbal in the Sport Canterbury administered Coach Force programme, supported by Task Force Green and the Canterbury Development Corporation. Jaye Bailey, a newcomer to korfbal, was our nominal 'employee' on this programme for the first six months of the calendar year. With her input the programme profiled korfbal in a number of primary schools throughout the region. At this stage it is not possible to quantify the direct benefits of this, however we have continued our participation in the programme through the second half of 2002 with Jay Erkkila taking the position. His longer association with korfbal has already helped provide entrée to a 'new'

korfball school – Star of the Sea Primary of Sumner, on which there will hopefully be a more detailed story of progress to be told in next year’s report.

Our most important achievements in the year under review, however, have been in the ongoing progress of our junior korfbal programme. This continues from what was reported in the 2001 year. We were able to bring two junior development strands together. Participants from Cobham Intermediate and our group of regular Thursday evening junior players took part first in a junior tournament during November 2001, then in a summer training camp in January 2002. These activities progressed to the selection of first a development squad then a representative Canterbury squad to participate in Korfbal Australia’s Regional Youth Championships in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, in May 2002. The establishment of this first ever Canterbury korfbal team, for participation in a representative tournament, was our most important achievement during the reporting period. Raising the funds to make the trip was a significant and often stressful task for Korfbal NZ as an organisation. The performance of the players on the trip was a great credit to them and a tremendous reward for the efforts of all those who assisted in the fund-raising process. For the record, in the Under 16 grade, the Canterbury team was second only to the host Bacchus Marsh team, being excluded from playing the hosts in the final due to our status as an ‘invitation’ (ie non-Australian) team. This is a situation Korfbal Australia has undertaken to review prior to the participation of any future NZ teams in their tournaments. The work of Pete Gill in as co-trainer of the squad, Carol Bathurst as squad manager and Ian Harding who attended as a refereeing representative all demand recognition. Also helping to ensure the success of this exercise – the sterling fund-raising work of John Mathieson, the coaching support of Erik Hoogteijling while he was visiting Christchurch and Helen Sewell while we were in Australia and a very supportive group of parents. In terms of the overall success of sending a squad away, the real measure will be seen longer term in the development of the players who made the trip and their continued involvement with korfbal.

Summer tournaments

Through the summer we have developed an enjoyable formula of outdoor tournaments on a Sunday morning – played in beach korfbal format. Particular thanks to Ewout van Bruchem who has invariably been the prime mover in organising these events.

Crusaders

Also over the summer we were invited to assist the Crusaders in their pre-season fitness regime, where we organised two korfbal sessions. While it would be stretching the truth to claim that our input was instrumental in their subsequent record-breaking season, it was a great pleasure to work with professional athletes and, speaking particularly for our younger players, a big thrill to interact with so many of our national heroes up close. In addition, we were able to use these sessions as a profile building opportunity, which was fortunate.

Rams

In a similar vein, through the fund-raising programme for the Under 16 squad, during May we played a short demonstration game during half time of a Rams basketball game at the WestpacTrust Centre. This was a memorable experience for the players involved and terrific to see korfbal played in a 7,000seat venue – even if all the seats were not occupied when we played there. It would be truly exhilarating, in time, if we are able to stage a korfbal event in the WestpacTrust Centre in our own right, though at this stage that is certainly just a vague aspiration, not a seriously formulated objective.

Outside Christchurch

Developing korfbal in other centres is more than just a vague aspiration. To date, however, it remains a project on which we have not managed to make significant lasting progress. During the year under review a group of Cobham Intermediate players visited their counterparts in Mayfield. Subsequently we organised a demonstration game in Kaikoura and have had some encouraging contact with Hokitika through our junior programme. The latter, in particular, shows great promise of becoming something we can help to establish on a more permanent footing. The success of the West Coasters in our Tuesday evening competition is a case in point. Most of this team played their first korfbal as members of the Westland High School team that Kim Bennett formed five years ago and took to Australia in 1999. Their present success – and the fact that they have developed into the cornerstone of our Under 23 squad, shows just how important it is to target young players. The group Kim is now working with in Hokitika is a three or four years younger than the ‘original’ Westland team, which is even greater reason for optimism.

In the medium term, however, we do need to find ways to support and initiate the more widespread development of korfbal in other centres. This remains an area of activity where we have generally under-performed.

Website

Emphatically deserving of praise in this report is our website – korfbal.org.nz. The standard of this site, due to the considerable efforts of Ian Harding and Trevor van Herpt, is very high. We frequently receive plaudits for the site from other korfballers internationally and from casual visitors to the site. If more judicious marketing of the site were undertaken, it would be possible to use the site to promote korfbal more vigorously in other centres. This is something we can look to work towards in the medium term.

Opportunities

The most important opportunity that we have at present is the chance to participate in the Asia Oceania Youth Korfbal Championships, in Victoria, Australia in January 2003. A dedicated squad of Under 23 players has been working towards this goal since June. At present we are attempting to overcome a considerably higher fund-raising hurdle than we had anticipated and it may be that New Zealand is not represented at the tournament. A decision on this will be made in early December.

It appears we also have the opportunity in the present financial year to gain recognition for korfbal from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), and possibly also from the NZ Olympic Committee. Although not clearly defined at present, recognition from both these bodies appears to offer considerable spin-offs in terms of networking and resources that should enable us to make gains for our sport into the future. Hopefully we will be able to report success in these endeavours in 12 months time.

As referred to earlier, by the end of the present financial year we should also expect to report significant progress with our junior players; to have successfully split our winter competition into ‘competitive’ and ‘social’ grades; to have completed introduction of a referees accreditation process and to have started something similar with a coaching process.

We are certainly not short of opportunities to promote and develop korfball. Prioritisation of resources – not least of which is the time and effort of those of our members able to devote themselves to advancing our sport – is, as always, the biggest challenge.

Acknowledgements

In summary, we gratefully recognise the support of a number of funding providers for helping us achieve so many significant milestones this year. The International Korfball Federation has provided great assistance each year since the incorporation of Korfball NZ in a number of areas, the Community Trust was once again very generous in supporting our juniors programme for the second year in succession, and the Sir Richard Hadlee Sports Trust, the Southern Trust, the Canterbury Foundation, Kiwanis and the HFK Trust all provided towards the considerable budget we needed to meet to take the Canterbury Under 16 squad to Australia.

Finally, my thanks to those who served as committee members during the year under review who have not already been mentioned in this report – Neil Macbeth, Lorelee Pope, and Gary McKay – who remained on the committee for the full year – and Richard Tankersley and Darelle Love, who also made an important contribution.

Rob Smith
Chairman
Korfball New Zealand Inc
16 November, 2002