

**Korfball New Zealand
Annual Report 2005
Chairman's Report**

This has been an important year for Korfball New Zealand. One in which we have been able to capitalise on a number of opportunities and set in train a new era for the organisation. In many ways, in fact, during the year we have established not just a new era but a new organisation, with many of the previous activities of Korfball New Zealand now falling under the auspices of Korfball Canterbury. Since the incorporation of Wellington Korfball and Auckland Korfball, Korfball New Zealand has been able to truly become what was originally intended – korfball's national body for New Zealand.

This has, of course, posed a number of challenges. A largely new executive committee was formed 12 months ago. We did not properly begin operating until the start of the 2005 calendar year. We have had to conduct the majority of our business via telephone, conference call and email, and to a large degree we have been breaking new ground with what we have endeavoured to achieve.

However, as at the start of the 2004/05 financial year, this transformation had not occurred – Korfball New Zealand was still in its pre-transformation mode and was the host of the 2004 Asia-Oceania Korfball Championships. This event was reported on in the previous annual report, and was a success, the significant national publicity from which provided a strong and timely boost to the establishment of Auckland Korfball. Although at the time of the event we thought we had made a modest profit, as circumstances turned out this was cancelled after one of our grant funders determined that we had under-spent on the purpose for which they provided assistance – this a direct consequence of the late withdrawal of the team from Indonesia

The Asia-Oceania tournament was the single largest project undertaken by KNZ to date. After expecting up to five participants, we were disappointed that only Australia and Chinese Taipei actually arrived – taking part along with our own New Zealand team and an invitational team. However, insofar as raising the profile of our sport and providing our most committed players with experience of international korfball was concerned, the tournament certainly met the objectives we had set.

Since the end of the financial year, New Zealand has been confirmed as the host of the 2007 Asia-Oceania Youth Korfball Championship. As a qualification round for the following year's World Youth Championship, this promises to be a considerably better attended event, and should test our capacity as a host yet further – hopefully delivering even greater benefit than we derived from the 2004 event. Although we have decided to hold the event in Christchurch, one of the challenges will be to ensure that Wellington Korfball and Auckland Korfball are also able to leverage benefit from the presence of international korfball in this country. Although it is still 21 months away, planning for this event, and the preparation of a New Zealand squad capable of performing with credit, will be an important focus during the 2005/06 year.

Since the international event, in the challenging circumstances faced in the 2004/05 year, creating a largely new organisation, we have made satisfactory progress in some areas, though still have many important tasks ahead.

Helping to establish our credibility as an organisation, during the year under review, we have been granted associate membership of the New Zealand Olympic Committee, and have achieved recognition status from Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). While these achievements are important markers of the progress we have made since the organisation was founded in 1997, they also open doors and networks that we should look to leverage more efficiently than we have done to date.

To guide and focus the activity of Korfball New Zealand, the executive committee has formulated a development strategy, articulating and prioritising a number of objectives for the organisation. While the executive committee is ultimately responsible for achieving these objectives, part of our mission has been to ensure that others beyond the executive committee are also engaged and committed to them. For a number of the set objectives we have already formulated and embarked upon action plans. For others this is an ongoing process.

We have held a number of national events, bringing korfballers from the three regions together for what have been competitive and enjoyable games. While each event has been successful, we need to build on this, streamline the events, improve their funding streams, make better use of the publicity and development opportunities they provide and reduce the burden placed on those responsible for hosting them. We are in the process of appointing a competition sub-committee for this purpose. I hope and expect that this time next year this sub-committee will be in the final stages of a successful programme of national events for 2006.

We have established a national squad, which is developing satisfactorily, demonstrating promising levels of commitment, enthusiasm and organisational skill, which are necessary prerequisites for success on court and bode well for the squad's big focus: the 2007 Asia-Oceania Korfball Championships, in Hong Kong next July. New Zealand is currently placed number 19 in the International Korfball Federation's rankings. Although there are a number of other criteria, the performance of our national squad will largely determine how far and how fast this ranking can be improved.

From an administrative perspective we have established a register so as to identify and track the individuals who are affiliated to Korfball New Zealand through their regional organisations. In the future, as Korfball New Zealand and its member organisations continue to grow, this will prove an invaluable tool that, if used in the way it has been designed, will have commercial, sponsorship and communication applications for Korfball New Zealand and our constituent members.

The ongoing development of our website has been another positive achievement, and one that, like the register, promises greater and greater dividends to the organisation in the future.

Since the end of the financial year we have also progressed what I believe will ultimately be of greater importance than the other projects we have begun this year:

we have prepared a job description and applied for financial assistance to employ an administration and development officer. Thus far we have received an initial tranche of grant funding, but really require additional finance before we can confidently proceed. When this comes to fruition with the appointment of someone to take on this role – and it is a matter of when, not if – we will take another important step towards consolidating the organisation and increasing the presence and profile of korfbal in New Zealand. Becoming an employer will also carry a number of new challenges, but I am confident we are in a position to successfully meet these.

Aside from the administrative area, the KNZ development strategy has two sub-sections: performance and participation. It is important that we maintain a balance between these two aspects. It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that many of those most motivated to be involved in our sport aspire more towards the performance end of the spectrum. However, we must be aware that without a larger player base it is going to be very difficult to build and sustain an elite group of korfballers. If we do not put energy and resource into increasing our player base, we will stagnate. If we do not have new players to play against, many of our existing players will become bored and give up. This is one of our most important challenges, one that we all need to focus on, and one that the appointment of an administration and development officer will ultimately make good progress with. However, better co-ordination of development activities is something the executive committee must focus on more directly in the next 12 months – particularly as the other projects we have so far worked to establish become more self-managing.

As part of the development strategy, we have established a Referees Committee, charged with, among other things, the development of referees. We have already established a structure for training and assessing referees. Rose Podvoiskis is the first New Zealand korfbal referee to progress through this structure onto the IKF's international referees list. This achievement reflects credit on Rose and also on the structure that has been developed – largely by Ian Harding. Among other important developments that need to occur in the coming year, Auckland and Wellington regions need to take advantage of the work of the Referees Committee and make progress with the accreditation of their own referees. As Rose has demonstrated – aside from carrying its own rewards, for those prepared to make the commitment, refereeing can be a means of participating in korfbal at a higher level than is presently available in New Zealand.

What has been achieved with the development of our referees also needs to occur with our coaches – that is a more formal process for becoming a recognised korfbal coach, as is the case in most other established sports. This project is included as part of the administration and development officer role. Until we can put in place such a training and accreditation process for korfbal coaches, we will struggle to achieve our potential in terms of both technical quality and player numbers.

The provision of equipment to schools has also been an impediment to our growth. As we have relied on the voluntary efforts of a small number of individuals to manufacture equipment, it has not been easy to provide timely and efficient delivery of equipment orders to our own regions, let alone to schools. It has certainly not been possible to market korfbal equipment to schools with any urgency. However, the adoption by the IKF of synthetic korfs as the standard equipment for our sport does

promise to have a welcome consequence of reducing the level of voluntary input required and potentially making equipment construction something we can fully pass over to a commercially motivated party.

The penetration of korfbal into schools is another highly important but tremendously daunting objective – one that really requires considerably more than voluntary effort to meet with any sustainable success. To that end, in the year under review we commissioned a resource document for secondary school teachers outlining how korfbal can be used to deliver the physical education curriculum. This resource has been fundamentally completed, but still requires some presentational work before being published on our website and marketed to teachers around the country. If this can be undertaken in tandem with the equipment construction initiative outlined above, and with focused input from a professional administration and development officer, we should begin to see real progress with schools. Having had a clear impression of how we need to proceed in this area for some years, it is gratifying to sense that we may finally be making some headway. However, what we will achieve will clearly be limited by the financial and human resources we are able to put into any projects focusing on schools. Such a caution aside, recent progress has become apparent in both Christchurch and Auckland where links to schools have been established and teachers motivated to teach and promote korfbal, or at least open the door for us. While not being the complete answer to developing our sport, such people are crucial and promise big dividends if we can nurture them more fully into our organisation.

There are many opportunities for us to strive for the objectives of KNZ – which are to promote and develop korfbal in New Zealand. Our success or failure as an organisation depends on how effectively we can prioritise those opportunities and how well we draw together to take advantage of them,

My thanks and acknowledgement in the 2004/05 year to the Korfbal New Zealand executive committee – Neil Macbeth (secretary), Greig Neilson (treasurer), Melissa Ho (registrar), Matt Day, Lorelee Pope and Tim Asby. Also to Kirsty Prentice, Jeanette Visser and Mike Oppenheim, who began the year as executive committee members but resigned during the course of the year.

Rob Smith
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