

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Good news! Our MSL1 team finally broke its duck for the season with a hard fought, come from behind and well earned win against TEM at our round 14 Peter Mac Big Match Day on Saturday 30th July. Fittingly the victory was at home in front of a loyal and ultimately delighted crowd and to some degree it beared more than a little passing semblance to a grand final win; which is a little understandable given that we have only won one other SL1 game before then and that was against Essendon in 2009. Well done to the MSL1 squad on long awaited but a thoroughly deserved result.

By the way did anyone notice the new MSL1 strip? It was designed by the players (directed by Kiwi 1 Chris Marr) and looks very sharp.

On the same day our WSL2 team continued its assault on the four with a well constructed defeat of Monash University. It has been great to see how well this team has re-invented itself under coach Andrew Layzell after some fairly tumultuous times over the past 12 months or so.

Even better news is that with just on a third of the home and away season to go, we have 15 teams (17 including U9s) out of 35 in contention for finals when September comes. To all those teams still in the hunt, keep the work rate up and with continued effort (and a bit of luck) hopefully you will enjoy success in the finals next month

While this is a good result for the club overall, it is tinged with some disappointment at the top end with our MPA, MPD and WPB grades all at risk of relegation at the end of the season. The situation is not irretrievable, but some good results are needed by all these teams over the next weeks if they are to avoid the drop. This really requires all hands to pump; everyone to training, everyone not injured to be available to play, and everyone working for each other doing the best they can to support

their team and their club. Come on guys you can do it!!

On supporting your club, SUHC's Big Car Raffle, our major fund raiser for the year is rapidly approaching draw day on our last Peter Mac Big Match day at Farm Road on 27th August 2011. This is not far away and I ask you all to make the final big effort to sell your tickets well before this date and return your ticket stubs and money to your team manager or Julian Pratt so that we can ensure that this fundraiser is a great success for your club. Remember, you will be helping your club to help you and/or your kids get the most out of your hockey at SUHC.

As an aside, the Peter Mac initiative has been a great success for both Peter Mac and SUHC. Many thanks to Julian and Nicolette Pratt who have made this program happen and of course our thanks to McKenzie's Foods for their invaluable support.

Some things to look forward to:

HV recently published its Competition Structure review document and details of the new system can be found on the HV website. SUHC has reviewed it and generally we support its directions and intentions and believe it to be in the best interests of all HV affiliates, long term.

We favour the establishment of a 12 club elite and sub elite competition structure to replace the current SL format and think that the establishment of a reserves competition that will move up and down lock-step with a club's top team is good for hockey. However, we advocate that HV implement this change to the SL competition only in 2012 rather than wait until 2013 as proposed so that the benefits of the new system is fairly shared to all clubs over the 2012/13 seasons. We are lobbying HV and other SL clubs in this regard.

Planning for Southern United Hockey Academy 2011/12 is well underway. There will be some changes to the structure of SUHA 2011/12 that take on board various learnings from last year's academy and notices regarding the program, nominations and selection will be coming out over the next week or so.

McKenzie's Skills Clinics and Hookn2Hockey in October and November are important to our juniors' continued skill development and player recruitment. Thanks to Julian Pratt and Deb Gardiner for driving these initiatives and thanks in advance to those players and coaches who will make their time available to ensure that these programs are run successfully. We cannot do it without your help.

Finally we are approaching the end of an era with MSL1 coach Scott Vaughan having announced that he will not be seeking re-appointment to this role in 2012. Under Scott MDHC were MSL2 premiers in 2006 which led to an MSL1 debut for SUHC in 2007, our inaugural year as a senior club. Since then Scott has been SUHC's MSL coach and he has guided our first's squad through 3 separate MSL1 campaigns in 2007, 2009 and 2011. Scott's contribution to the development of our playing group and indeed our club over this time cannot be under played. His dedication and application to the task, the playing group and the club has been unsurpassed and while we have yet to repeat the glory of 2006, there is no doubt that under Scott's guidance our MSL squad has improved every year. Scott will continue to coach our MSL1 squad until the end of this season, and on behalf of SUHC I thank him warmly for his contribution and wish him and his family well for the future.

David Finlayson – President