

## **2022 President's Report – Matamata Swifts AFC**

Welcome to the 2022 Annual General Meeting of Matamata Swifts Association Football Club, Inc.

I began last year's President's Report with the following:

*"In many ways, I wish this was the final report I ever had to write as President of Matamata Swifts AFC. This club has taken a lot out of me over the years, with rapidly decreasing levels of personal satisfaction and a fading sense of accomplishment. I know there is a small group of people who share my vision of what this club could be, but we have an overwhelming number of members who, to date, have made this hard, if not virtually impossible, to achieve. That becomes harder and harder to take as the years go by.*

*"I believe we're not currently the club we could be, and that's because of our people. Me included. What are we all going to do to be better? For what it's worth, my message to every player, coach, parent, fan, and administrator of our club is to ask yourselves what being a Swift means to you. Then do something meaningful about it."*

Well, the plan is that this *will* be the final report I have to write as President. Let's see how we go with that. For the other stuff, I think we're improving thanks to the efforts of a few more of us, so we're on the right track.

I'd like to thank the club's management committee for their work during 2022. Every one of us has made an impact this season. I'd like to say a special thank you to Rob who, while incredibly busy, has been an excellent sounding board, whether he knows it or not. I've really valued all the conversations we've had this year, Rob.

Before continuing with this year's summary, I'd like to acknowledge the passing of Barry Simonsen in late-2021. Simmo was a legend around these parts and a great friend to all of us. His contribution to this club, especially during our more formative years, was huge and will never be fully measured. Simmo will always be missed.

This report covers our main operational areas, with summaries of each.

### **Senior Operations**

The plan during 2022 was to focus on fielding teams for all the local senior players who wanted to play, without any overly burdensome expectations on performance levels. In that sense, we made it through 2022 with acceptable results.

Thank you to Josh (Comag Matamata Swifts), Mike (Challenge Matamata Swifts Ladies) and Aiden (Fez Swifts All Stars) for taking on the coaching challenges involved with your respective teams. Your players will likely never know the amount of time you put into your volunteer roles...but I do and am grateful for your efforts.

Our facilities continued to frustrate during 2022, but we're a bit closer, at least, to having the lighting situation resolved. When we finally get those new lights up the Domain will be transformed.

We have already appointed Bradley Rea as our 1st team coach for 2023 and will look to confirm coaching roles with our other senior teams over the next couple of months. My hope is we will be able to field at least one more senior team in 2023 – an ambition that should be comfortably achieved if we can get the training facilities sorted and translate the current air of optimism into bodies on the ground in early-2023.

## **Junior & Youth Operations**

Junior playing numbers continue to be strong. We fielded 12 travelling teams alongside our Mini-Kickers in 2022. Finding coaches is always a challenge, but we managed to engage an excellent group of parent coaches this year who all dealt superbly with the various challenges they faced. Thank you to everyone who looked after one of our teams. I hope it was as rewarding for you as it has been for me over the years.

Along with regular Saturday games, we had various teams attend tournaments through the season. These are great ways to test some of our more aspirational players against some strong opposition. Well done to our 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Tigers who became the first Matamata Swifts team to win the Vincent Green Memorial Tournament. I promised to buy all the players ice creams if they won, which turned out to be a very worthwhile investment.

Following the completion of the season we put the call out to the parents of our junior membership, looking to re-establish a sub-committee to run our junior programmes. Interest has been strong and I'm really looking forward to seeing what we can do next year. Thank you, in advance, to all the parents who have offered their support.

Thanks, as always, to Hayri and Fez Kebab who sponsored junior training shirts for the third year. This season's selection of colours certainly stood out, and is great exposure for the club and Fez, especially around the local schools.

We have a growing relationship with the Ricki Herbert Football Academy. Junior and youth players from the club, Matamata Intermediate and Matamata College were all able to benefit from extra development coaching – much of which was subsidised by the club thanks to our fundraising efforts.

We have made great progress with re-introducing futsal to Matamata's junior players. Working with Matamata Intermediate school, we were able help ensure a number of our young players had a great AIMS Games experience. That has flowed through to the summer and our entry of three teams in the Hamilton-based term 4 junior futsal leagues. We'll look to further integrate futsal into our activities during 2023.

## **Facilities & Grounds**

While the Domain lights are an ongoing issue, we did make progress in other areas, upgrading the two changing rooms at the start of the year, while also improving, quite markedly, the match day experience at the clubrooms. Thank you to Nat for taking on the later project – it's made a real difference.

We are much closer to getting the lights up. In fact, we're just one signature away from actually being able to start digging some holes in the Domain. The lights themselves are here, the new poles are on their way (thanks to pledges from a heap of club members and some local companies), and we've had various offers of help with the other work.

New lights at the Domain will transform the place, making the training experience so much better as well as opening up other opportunities. We're so close...

## **Sponsorship & Fundraising**

We are in a solid financial position, finishing the 2021/22 financial year with a good level of cash in the bank. Sponsorship support remains solid, while we were recipients of two sizeable grants – from the Lion Foundation and the Four Winds Foundation.

We also had organisations, such as Ultra Football and Baigent Motors, who have significant in-kind sponsorship arrangements with us.

The new player registration system also ensured getting subs paid on time was a more efficient and far more successful experience. That helped hugely with finances during the early part of the season.

## **Summary**

I think we can look forward to 2023 with a huge amount of positivity, which is testament to the work done by this year's management committee and a better approach taken, in general, by our membership. Looking back, my impression of my 2021 report was it contained a heap of negativity. Twelve months on things look markedly different.

It is now, hopefully, time for someone with new energy to fill the role as President of Matamata Swifts AFC. I won't be going anywhere and would like to play my part on our 2022/23 management committee. But we need new leadership.

Please accept this report as a summary of the season just completed.

**Dwayne Barlow**

President, Matamata Swifts AFC