

Dear Members.

On behalf of the Fencibles Board, Players Committee & our Senior Coaching/Management I am excited to be contacting you today to give you an update on our club & to also announce our new DOF (Director of football)

Background

For many years football clubs across New Zealand have found it increasingly challenging to deliver a quality football programme whilst staying financially viable for the long term. In recent years NZF along with AFF have set clubs specific criteria that they must achieve to get their club licenses & to meet these standards, which includes a qualified DOF & qualified coaches across the age groups. By meeting these standards clubs are then given a license which allows them to offer both a community (social) & player pathway programmes for our members.

One of the biggest challenges for every club to meet the licencing criteria is the ability to identify, recruit and develop a suitably qualified DOF and qualified coaches across the difference age groups, and the large costs associated with this. Most clubs cannot afford to pay for their own DOF & qualified coaches from their membership fees so clubs then rely heavily on unsecured monthly grant funding. This is a high risk short term approach with no long term secure financial future. Many clubs have this structure & for many it is not working hence why a lot of these clubs are currently talking together on ways to consolidate costs whilst still being able to deliver a quality programme. Some clubs have joined together, some are removing teams from different age groups, & others will have to move to community (social) based only as they won't be able to afford to run the player pathway programmes that require qualified coaches.

With many clubs currently having to go through significant changes due to high (DOF, Coaching) costs our board decided to start a club wide internal review because we realised that to continue down the same path as many other clubs we would be setting Fencibles AFC up for a high cost, high risk unsecured future. Other clubs have already proven this model is unsustainable & not the way forward.

So during our review process we set ourselves some non-negotiables -

- **we did not want to lose our club identity**
- **we wanted to stay independent & not join with another club**
- **we want to be able to offer both social & player pathway football**
- **we wanted to deliver a better all-round football offer through our community (social) & competitive players**

So it soon became clear during our review process that to be able to deliver the best football

programmes, have the best qualified coaches, support our parent coaches, deliver a proper player pathway & to be able to afford it all that we would need to be brave & do something not done in New Zealand before.

Club Announcement

After many months of discussions & working through a vigorous process we are pleased to advise that Fencibles and Eastern Suburbs will be signing a Resource Sharing Partnership Agreement.

This partnership will revolve around resource and idea sharing that will allow Fencibles to keep our club identity & stay independent whilst being able to bring into our club high calibre coaches and resources that will benefit all of our members.

Eastern Suburbs over the years have proven themselves to be a well-structured & professionally run club in New Zealand which has enabled them to grow their membership numbers to over 2500. They have a significant stable of qualified coaches & their football standards & coaching methods are well established and respected which is why they continue to develop strong players. Eastern Suburbs have senior men's & women's teams in the Premier division (winter) & the ISPS league (national league) & the OFC (Oceania football Competition) so they are a true player pathway club at the top level in NZ.

With this agreement there are many benefits and for Fencibles we see this as great opportunity for East Auckland to finally be able to deliver a very high quality coaching programme across all age groups delivered by appropriately qualified coaches within the club.

Director of Football Announcement

With this sharing agreement the first significant move by both clubs is that we will be sharing a DOF. Tony Readings the current DOF for Eastern Suburbs has accepted the dual role for both clubs. Sharing a DOF has not been done before so this is new ground in NZ football & one which we are very excited about. We believe this will be the blueprint for many other clubs in the future.

Tony Readings has an extensive coaching background at all levels of the game. He has spent his career immersed in high performance sporting environments and has led teams at multiple World Cups & Olympic games. He is the current New Zealand National men's under 20

coach & works very closely with Danny Hay (NZ men's coach). Tony also has a passion for women's football & coached the Football Ferns to their highest ever FIFA ranking of 16 in the world. Previous to his current role Tony was involved with High Performance Sport New Zealand supporting Olympic Sports in the area of High Performance Athlete Development. Tony holds a PRO coaching license. He is also a strong believer in focusing on the community (Social) players whom want to have a great experience whilst not wanting to progress to higher levels.

Tony will commence his dual DOF role in July & he will support the club to formulate a football plan that we can roll out club wide from our First Kicks 5 year olds thru to our seniors. He will support the club in upskilling & coaching the many parent coaches & current qualified coaches whom want to develop more. By empowering our coaches they will then be able to deliver a better footballing standard & experience to all of our members – Community & player pathway players.

Please welcome Tony to the Fencibles family.

(Fencibles would also like to acknowledge and thank the other high calibre DOF candidates who expressed interest in joining the club)

New Qualified Coaches

With this new agreement we are also pleased to advise that we have started sharing qualified coaches – with this being a first in NZ we are using this as a test case to be able to iron out any kinks before we roll more coaches throughout the club.

We are pleased to advise we have appointed Michael Built as the new coach for our 17 NRF Metro boys team. Michael is currently the DOF at Sacred Heart College & is completing his A license. Michael has represented NZ in both under 17 & 20 age groups & he currently plays in the National League & Premier league competitions. Michael Built will be assisted by Michael Pouloupoulos who has worked for the Coerver Academy & coaches at Eastern Suburbs in the girls junior/youth space,

For many years Fencibles has lost aspirational players because we have not had a pathway or suitably qualified coaches required across all age groups.

With this agreement it will give our players direct exposure & access to a large number of highly qualified coaches, an established coaching philosophy and an aligned style of play.

In the past a lot of focus has been placed on our men's first team & whilst this is our clubs front window we are very focused on making sure our 5-15 age groups (both community & development) are looked after so we will be investing in these age groups by upskilling &

supporting parent coaches & by bringing in more qualified coaches as the partnership evolves. These age groups are our clubs future.

Our men's 1st & reserve teams will still play a very important role & we are 100% focused to gain promotion this year into Division 1.

Fencibles is a big club with many members playing both a socially & competitively so it is important that we strengthen our playing base & offer a wide programme suitable for everyone including our community players whom make up the majority of our club.

We understand that change is not for everyone but to do nothing but to continue to deliver the same is a step backwards.

We trust you will support us on this innovative step change to improve our club & our football offer to you.

Q&A's

So what does this really mean?

Q: Will my fees go up ? A: No, they will remain as set for the season.

Q: Am I now part of Eastern Suburbs AFC ? A: No. Fencibles United AFC will retain its own identity and will continue to operate independently from board level down. We are only sharing a DOF, selected coaching resources & operational methods.

Q: Will there still be a place for players just looking to enjoy their football socially ? A: Absolutely yes. Our clubs core base of members are our community players who just want to play the game at their own level. We will always provide an environment for all levels of players to enjoy their football, be it socially or pathway focussed.

Q: What does this mean for me as a Junior player ? A: Overtime we will be investing in upskilling our parent coaches & bringing in qualified coaches to support our junior players from an early age. This is where we want to establish our coaching philosophy and align our style of play.

Q: What does this mean for me as a Youth player ? A: This season we have already invested into qualified coaches to coach our 13 NRF Metro & 17 NRF Metro teams & we will continue to upskill parent coaches & place more qualified coaches across the age groups.

Q: What does this mean for me as a Social Senior player ? A: Not a lot initially but over time we will be holding open training sessions with qualified coaches. Additionally a lot of these senior players have kids at the club so you will see a better delivery of football for them.

In summary:

We encourage you to join us on this exciting trailblazing journey to improve our club & our football offering to you, our Fencibles family

We will keep you informed as we progress and we'll always welcome your feedback, so please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone on the board or players committee to discuss anything.
Thank you.

Northern Regional Football will be putting out a press release this afternoon.

Kind regards
Aaron Carson
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