

Dear All

*Change...*

I was disappointed in May last year watching four of the five Capilano teams lose in the finals. Of course it was great that we had all five teams in the finals, but in terms of performance one could not help lament that in the four we lost, execution of basic skills under pressure and some poor option taking let us down at crucial times. There was no question the hunger and will to win during the game was there, but as Aristotle astutely noted and what I read at the bottom of some of your emails:

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit."

Simply put, I don't think we banged out enough reps of good skill and K.P.I'S (Key Performance Indicator's) to make it automatic when we needed it to be. We need to be desperate to improve on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as the weekend and be disciplined enough to do what is required during the week without taking the short cuts.

We are not far away from producing some very good rugby performances, but we need to accept there is room for development and improvement in all areas of our game on and off the field.

Change will be needed if we wish to continue to be the largest and most successful rugby club in North America.

But!

Just because a few things will be different doesn't mean everything will change.

I am remunerated well by the club to ensure good performances each week are rewarded each with good results. I am also paid, in part, to keep ahead of other clubs by having an eye on the future. Being an innovative club that leads rather than follows has its inherent risks, but recent and not so recent hard work by many has given us breathing space to be brave and try something new this Fall Season.

2009 will see the club launch its inaugural Capilano Rugby Academy. The Academy will be a selected group of mostly U23 players that will represent the club in the Elite Division in the fall season.

This Academy will be proudly supported by the Capilano Rugby Alumni and powered by Level 10 Fitness.

Academy players physiotherapy and trainer needs will still be the responsibility of West Vancouver Physiotherapy.

Ten months of club rugby is too long to expect seasoned Premier players to give it everything week in week out year after year. The Academy will provide an opportunity to expose young players to a higher level of competition while at the same time giving more senior players a window to recondition and contribute to the club in other ways. Senior players can contribute by

acting as a coach or mentor if they wish to do so, while giving their bodies a rest and their minds a different focus which is always healthy.

There will always be a game for those senior players who need their rugby fix. These games will provide a chance to play with some different faces under some different coaches, and a chance immediately after the game to share a beer with some new mates and pass on some knowledge about playing, or about being a Capilano in a setting that is crucial to a clubs development.

The Academy is a new thing, and there are bound to be some bumps in the road, but I am convinced the idea has enough merit to give it a try. It will have its best chance of success if we have “buy in” and contributions from all the stakeholders. In return all the stakeholders will benefit from its success.

Many have already rolled their sleeves up and got involved in a positive way, and this is outstanding. I have not heard any negative traffic regarding the Academy, but I am aware that there are a few questions out there that deserve answers.

In an attempt to answer most of them I have provided some FAQ'S with answers below.

#### [What is the Academy?](#)

The Capilano Rugby Academy is a group of 25 players that are mostly under the age of 23. They will train together from 6:40pm to 7:30pm each Tuesday and Thursday from August to November. Each week 15 plus a few fresh spares will be picked to play other clubs Elite teams in the 3:00pm game. Each academy member is also given a strength and conditioning programme. This programme equates roughly to three hours gym work a week.

#### [What happens to the Academy at 7:30?](#)

They stop being the Academy and train with everyone else.

#### [Can anyone turn up at 6:40 and do the extra skill sessions with the Academy?](#)

Absolutely! Everyone is welcome to train and do everything the Academy does including the strength and conditioning work at the gym.

#### [Why include players that are over the age of 23? And how many are there?](#)

There are currently two backs and three forwards that are over the age of 23. The purpose of the programme is mainly to develop potential Premier players of the future, and to increase the total number of players that are able to make the step up to Premier each spring. There is a short fall in some positions so players that have the potential to fill that void in the immediate future have been included. The Academy programme can also be used to bring players back to the fold after a lengthy injury lay off.

#### [Who is eligible for the Academy?](#)

Every member of the club is eligible. Given the commitment levels in terms of time the Academy is not for everyone. The Academy is for those who the club think would benefit most from graduating from the Academy.

### How do people apply for the Academy and who selects the Academy?

In the future a Board of Directors will run the Academy Programme. The Board will be comprised of a coach from each division and a representative from the Alumni. At the end of each Spring Season players will apply for the Academy through the Board in the same way they apply for the "Stormy Exchange."

Initially it was thought a Board could meet in the early part of the Fall Season in August and select an Academy focus group and then trim the squad from there.

It is now apparent that July /August and the early part of September is not a great time to organise anything as most people have other commitments and are out of town.

### What do the Academy players receive?

They receive a tracksuit, a t-shirt and a gym membership valid from August to November.

### Have dues increased because of the Academy?

No.

### Because they are given more will the Academy players do more around the club to help out?

Absolutely.

### What if I have been a Premier player in the past and still want to compete at the highest level?

Most clubs have embraced the concept of using the Fall Season 3 p.m. game for development purposes, and so any Premier player wanting to get a game of competitive rugby will do so in the 1p.m. game. It is hoped that the Premier players at each club will use the opportunity to drop down and play in the Lower divisions and help improve the quality of play by acting as mentors and leaders on the field. It is also hoped that these more experienced players will use the chance to have a beer after the game with players that they would not normally get a chance to do so with. It is also thought they would enjoy having the chance to have a beer or soft drink and watch the main game so they can give advice to the younger players when they finish the game.

### Will this leave some players underdone before the Spring Season?

No and hopefully the opposite will happen. Remaining fresh in the mind and body and looking at the game from a coaching and mentoring prospective should have a positive influence on players that continue to involve themselves at the club at some level.

All players wishing to play Premier in the spring will be asked to attend a Premier squad camp in November. At this camp all players will be tested for their fitness levels and some key skill components. Game sense and awareness will also be tested at this camp. The squad will meet once a week November through to mid January. The squad will then train three times a week from mid January to mid February. From mid February to April the squad will train twice a week. From April to mid May the squad will again train three times a week.

What if I want to be a Premier player in the future and am keen to do whatever it takes but have not been asked to be in the academy?

All players are welcome and are encouraged to attend the skill sessions prior to trainings at 6:40pm Fitness strength programmes will also be made available to anyone who wishes to have them.

All players have the same opportunity to train on Tuesdays and Thursdays and will have a chance to push for higher honours come the Spring season. There will be no favouritism or preference given to players who were in the Academy. Come November all bets are off and the best players will be selected each week for each team.

What are other clubs doing?

Most clubs are embracing the idea of using the Fall Season to develop younger players in the 3 p.m. game. To what extent only time will tell.

Isn't the Academy developing a club within the club and therefore risking the potential of a clique? Something we have tried so hard to eradicate?

No. There are too many good club people in the club who will ensure this will not happen.

What if I've read all of this and I still have some concerns or questions or just want to tell Turner he is out to lunch on this one?

Then pick up the phone and ring him @ 604 783 4479 or email him at [kiwiturner@hotmail.com](mailto:kiwiturner@hotmail.com)

All comments, thoughts and ideas are welcome. Always.

But,

coming second in May is wearing very thin with me, and I'm sure with you and our loyal fans. Except for the Mighty Thirds, we all have unfinished business to take care of.

I have a very clear idea of the steps required to make this a reality, and ask that members support and allow this particular step to run its course before passing judgment.

I apologise for another quote.

"Change is the law of life. And those who look to only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." - Kennedy.

Peace

Nick Turner