

2020 Annual Report - Bond University Rugby

The Bond University Rugby Club continues to be the Club of choice for male and female rugby players on the Gold Coast striving to reach their individual rugby aspirations and to develop these in a holistic and supportive team environment. Our strategy to assist the Gold Coast and Districts Rugby Union (GCDRU) to improve the standard of the competition on the Gold Coast is with a view to having a sustainable development pathway for both Gold Coast rugby players and coaches into the future. This continues to be a major focus of the board as does our relationships with key schools on the Gold Coast where our Coaches are encouraged to be involved as coaches at local rugby schools, thereby also creating pathways for our future players.

In what has turned out to be a very difficult year for all rugby clubs, the QLD Premier Rugby competition was fortunate to start and it is a credit to the administrators of our code that the Premier Rugby Club General Managers, together with the QLD Rugby Union, managed under very trying circumstances to deliver our game in a safe environment, albeit in a shortened format. Despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 to the playing season, the lockdown had a positive impact on our club culture where everyone pulled together to help those who were experiencing mental and financial stress. In many ways this has been a breakout season for our club and in a year of financial difficulty and uncertainty, the Bond University Rugby Club is very proud of the significant milestone of entering a 3rd Grade and a Women's XV's team for the first time in the Club's history. We fielded the following teams in the QLD Premier Rugby Competition, and we hope that our finals performances outlined below are the building blocks for premierships in 2021 and beyond:

Senior Men's: 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd Grade

Colts: Colts 1 and Colts 2

Women: 1st Grade

MEN'S RUGBY:

SENIORS:

After narrowly missing the final series for the last 2 consecutive years, 1st grade made their first visit to Ballymore in the Hospitals Cup Challenge, beating GPS in the Semi-final and losing to Easts, eventual winners of the 2020 Hospitals Cup Challenge. Bond University Rugby is very proud of our 1st grade team's achievement in reaching this milestone. Congratulations to Bond University Rugby's senior representative players for 2020 who were:

Wallabies: James Slipper (achieved 100 cap milestone)

Super Rugby: Angus Blyth, Alex Mafi, Zane Nonggorr (debutant), James Slipper (Brumbies)

COLTS:

Colts 1 also made their first finals series in 2020. A further milestone for the Club. Losing in the Preliminary final to eventual winners Brothers, the Colts program ensures that our Club is in good hands for the future. With 20+ players graduating from the Colts program in 2021, our senior depth will continue to benefit.

The Bond University Rugby Club has in past years had a large number of players and staff selected to play for the u19 Bond University Qld Country (URC), Australian u20s, Australian School selection, youth 7s and XV's teams. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, rugby representative pathway programs did not eventuate for 2020. Planning for the 2021 season has indicated that these players may be given an opportunity for selection in 2021. Congratulations to the players who did gain selection in representative pathways in 2020:

QLD Reds Academy: George Blake, Wilson Blyth, Spencer Jeans, Zane Nonggorr, Hamish Roberts, Dion Samuela, Jack Winchester

Australian u20 Camp: Spencer Jeans, Jack Winchester, Wilson Blyth, Tyrell Kopua, Dion Samuela, George Blake, Zane Nonggorr

QAS 7s – Tokyo Olympic Trials: Dan Boardman, Ryan Menzies, Liam Dillon, Hamish Roberts, Joey Fittock.

Pathway to Premier: Our Pathway to Premier program, established in 2017 for rugby players aged 16 – 18yo, is a skill-based program preparing players for Premier Colts rugby, while playing school and club Rugby locally. There has been significant transition from this program into our Colts Program as well as a number of players transitioning into Senior Rugby with an improved skill level and game understanding.

WOMEN'S

RUGBY:

The Bond University Rugby Club was proud to enter its first Premier Women's XV's team into the Qld Premier Rugby competition. The inclusion was another significant milestone for the Club which will compliment the development of our Aon7s players, while establishing a new pathway for female Rugby players on the Gold Coast.

The Aon Women's 7s Program is about to commence with a new look format being played in April-May 2021. It will be an exceptionally long season for the women who have completed the XV's season and seeking selection in our AON7s program. Bond University Rugby Club is one of only 2 QLD Premier Clubs that can offer women a XV's and 7s program at this level, managed and delivered by experienced staff and coaches. Congratulations to the representative players in our women's programs for 2020:

Australian Women's 7s: Charlotte Caslick, Lauren Brown

Wallaroos (XVs): Millie Boyle (VC), Taz Sheppard, Lucy Lockhart

Women's QLD select team (XVs): Caity Costello, Aleena Greenhalgh, Sophie Holyman, Carola Kreis, Faythe Manera (Unavailable), Miah O'Sullivan, Grace Qaranivalu, Melanie Wilks (injured)

Super W 2020 (XVs): Aleena Greenhalgh, Cobie-Jane Morgan, Emily Bass, Kirby Sefo, Melanie Wilks, Setu Naseri (Assistant Coach), Damon Virtue (Assistant Coach)

Women's QAS 7s Squad: Emily Bass (National PONI Squad Member), Caity Costello, Maddi Levi, Teagan Levi, Faythe Manera, Miah O'Sullivan

EVENTS

The Bond University Rugby Club continually aspires to bring significant rugby events to the Gold Coast to assist in the promotion of the game in our community. This year we were unable to host our regular school finals, the NRC competition, the Oceania u20s competition, the GCDRU finals, or the youth girls state championships. These events are targeted strategically for recruitment, financial opportunity and branding purposes which, again due to COVID-19, we were unable to host in 2020.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Bond University, who whole heartedly support our Qld Premier Rugby and AON Women's 7s programs. We are indeed very fortunate that the university affords our Club and members the privilege to train and play at such fantastic facilities.

Along with numerous other stakeholder relationships, the Bond University Rugby Club enjoys a strong relationship with the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) where we help develop both men and women academy players in our programs. This is a beneficial relationship for the University, the IRFU, the

Bond University Rugby Club and our players and staff by engaging in international development and educational opportunities. We would like to thank the IRFU.

Within our Club we are extremely fortunate to receive unwavering backing and support from our parents, families, members and support group; our volunteers, including our Board, our staff, and coaches, the players and of course all of our amazing sponsors.

Bond University Rugby Club is fortunate to offer the exclusive John Eales Excellence Scholarship annually and this would not be possible without the continued support of some amazing people, Terry Jackman AM, John Eales AM and Bond University. The recipients of the scholarships are very fortunate to have the support of these stakeholders and the Bond University Rugby Club to set a holistic foundation to their promising rugby careers.

Another major milestone for our club in 2020 was that thirty-five registered players of the Bond University Rugby Club were enrolled students at Bond University. Our rugby program does not require players to be a student at Bond University, however the Club is fortunate to contribute to the student experience and supports the University's values.

As the Gold Coast's only Premier Rugby Club, we continue to develop and improve our programs, offering players, coaches and administrators an environment to improve and develop into the QLD state programs and beyond while acknowledging our responsibility to assist in the growth of the game in our local district and surrounding areas.

Dr Manny Pohl AM

President – Bond University Rugby

14 November 2020