



DIGGERS



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

Message from the Chairman

Firstly welcome to the first of what will be a monthly newsletter during the rugby season. The aim of this newsletter is to keep the club members and sponsors up to date on the happenings at the club, and to build the club spirit.

As most of you are aware Mr. Frank Stockton resigned as Chairman of Diggers in March this year and I have taken over the role as Chairman with the blessing of the EXCO, the President, the Life President, the Coaches and majority of the players and members.



For those of you who don't know me, I have been involved with Diggers for the past nine years, initially coaching and managing in the Junior section, then playing for the DOBS (Diggers Old Boys). I have been involved with the EXCO for two of the past three years. I have a great passion for the Club, and I believe that we can achieve great success in the near future.

Having taken over the running of the Club in conjunction with our President Philip van Zyl we have realised that there are a lot of issues that have to be resolved at the Club, and we are starting on them one by one. The fields are in a better condition than we have seen them for many years, and the accolades for that must go to Philip and his team. They have worked tirelessly since November fertilising, watering and cutting both fields and generally improving their condition month by month.



The lights are another bone of contention, but we are making progress there. Last year we had only two lights working on the "B" field and were dependant on the baseball club putting on their lights for us to be able to use our fields. As of Friday we have twelve lights working on the field, with another bulb to be replaced early next week. I can assure all of you that the lights on our "B" field are better than the lights at two of the First Division clubs that I have recently visited, in fact I venture to say that they are equal or better to the lights on their "A" fields. Our "A" field had quite a few lights replaced towards the end of last season, and we intend

improving them further this season. It is our intention to have a minimum of six lights working per pole, which is more than adequate to play a match, and hopefully we will continue to improve as finances become available.

Other projects that we are busy with at the moment is grassing the area outside the Diggers Pub and Grill so that we can have an improved entertainment area, and improving the condition of our

car park. There are a lot of projects that need to be done not least of all is improving the change room facilities for our teams and our visitors, as well as a few cosmetic improvements.

Each month we will be running a feature on a former player for Diggers, who has contributed to the success of our great club.

In closing I would like to convey our thanks and congratulations to the Coaches for the wonderful job that they are doing. At the time of writing this our 1st XV and U21 Teams are top of the log after two rounds of the league, our 3rd XV are in second spot trailing by just one bonus point and our second team are seventh on the log. Overall the club is in second spot, equal on points to Randfontein and trailing only on points difference. The success that we are having can only be due to the efforts of the coaches, and the players. We have a number of tough games coming up, train hard, play hard, but most of all enjoy it!

BE PROUD TO BE A DIGGER !

Jonathan Palmer
(Chairman)

Alf Larard (30/12/1870 to 15/08/1935)

So right now you are wondering who is Alf Larard, and why should he feature in our newsletter. Well firstly I have to thank Mr. Chris Schoeman, who has just released a book called "The number 10's", I can recommend it to anyone that is interested in the history of Rugby.

South African Rugby, and Diggers Club, owes much to Alf Larard. Born on the 30 December 1870 in Kingston-Upon-Hull in England Arthur Larard (Alf to his friends) emigrated to South Africa at the tender age of 17, presumably searching for opportunities in the booming gold mining industry. Alf joined the Diggers RFC in 1895 from Pirates and was selected for the Transvaal team that year.

In 1896 Alf was selected for the Springboks to face the touring British Team. This was the second ever test series for South Africa having played a British touring team in 1891, losing all three matches.

Alf played in the second test at the Wanderers Club which South Africa lost 8 – 17. He did not play in the next test in Kimberley, but returned for the final test in Cape Town. Larard scored the only try of the game under the posts for an easy conversion, and South Africa won the Test 5 – 0. **This was South Africa's first ever Test victory** – and the winning try came from a Diggers man, doesn't that make you proud?

In 1901 Larard returned to England and signed up to play professional rugby league. He played for Huddersfield for four years captaining them in his last season, retiring at thirty-four years of age.

Alf never returned to South Africa, but he will forever be recorded in the rugby history of this country as the man that scored the try that gave South Africa it's first test victory.



Junior Section Report Back

Once again the Junior section is Chaired by Dave Moore this year. Dave has been an amazing tower of strength to this section of the Club and has helped it grow year by year. Diggers Junior section is one of the strongest in the GLRU and we can be proud of that, there are many Pirates Grand Challenge Clubs that do not have the Junior infrastructure that we have at Diggers. These are the Diggers players of the future so we must look after them.



The Junior section started training at the end of March, and so far the turnout has been very good. The boys up to U-13 have been training, and after the school holidays they will start with the boys up to U-18. Jem van Vuren has taken control of the players up to U-13 and has put a huge amount of time and effort into the Club. We are very grateful for Jem's efforts. Jem has also been appointed by the Club to represent us at the GLRU on all matters pertaining to Junior Club Rugby. The first major decision to come out of the GLRU committee this year was that games will no longer be played at a central venue, all clubs will play on a home and away basis. This is excellent as the Clubs will once again start to get more feet through the doors and the boys get to play on their own patch. The negative side is that there will be more travelling for the parents, but trust me this can sometimes be an interesting experience.

Last year there were around 160 Junior members, and this year we hope to push that to over 200. On home games we will try and get the visiting teams to bring their Junior section to play in the morning that way creating a better Club atmosphere.

It would be much appreciated if some of the Senior Club Players could come to the Junior training once in a while to try and help build the Club spirit. Imagine the thrill of a U-9 boy being lifted in a line out by the 1st XV locks. Let's build a bridge between the Junior and Senior sections so that the boys want to come and watch and support the home games. Please liaise with Jem if you will be able to help.

Membership Fees and Sponsorships.

Playing any sport costs money, and it is the choice of each one of you to participate in this great sport of ours. There are many costs involved that you need to make allowance for, the cost of boots, training kit, support equipment, protective kit such as gum guards and scrum caps and transportation. As a club we get a very small grant from the GLRU and that does not even cover the cost of the coaches and Club Manager, let alone the cost of maintaining and preparing the fields. Add to that the rent that we must pay the municipality and the cost of water, lights, sewerage and refuse removal, and all in all it costs a small fortune to operate the club year by year.

All of the improvements that we will make at the club will cost even more money, and while we as a committee will try and raise funds, it is your responsibility as members to pay your subscription fees on time. **The rate for the 2011 season is only R675.00.** If you cannot afford to pay this amount then please approach Jonathan, Philip or the Club Manager Andre, and we will see what type of plan we can work out for you.

For those of you that are gainfully employed please speak to the owner of your company or Manager and see if they would be interested in advertising at the club. We will be putting up advertising signs on Republic road and this will give them great exposure for a small fee every month.

Diggers used to be one of the best, and most respected Rugby Clubs in South Africa, and for various reasons we have lost that reputation. The time has come to get it back. We need to improve the Club, and we need the help of you, the members to do that. In the amended words of the late great American President John F Kennedy, ask not what your club can do for you, **ask what you can do for your club.**

Remaining Fixtures

Saturday	07 May	Harlequins	Harlequins Rugby Club
Saturday	14 May	Inquina	Inquina Rugby Club
Saturday	21 May	Bye	
Saturday	28 May	Germiston Simmers	Home
Saturday	4 June	Randfontein	Randfontien Rugby Club
Friday	10 June	Johannesburg Police	Home
Saturday	18 June	Wes Wits	Wes Wits Rugby club
Saturday	25 June	Khosa	Khosa Rugby Club
Saturday	02 July	Wanderers	Home
Saturday	09 July	Harlequins	Home
Friday	15 July	Inquina	Home
	18 to 23 July	North region	Sub Union Tournament
Saturday	30 July	Bye	
Saturday	06 August	Germiston Simmers	Germiston Simmers Rugby Club
Friday	12 August	Randfontein	Home
Friday	19 August	Johannesburg Police	Jhb Police Rugby club
Friday	26 August	Wes Wits	Home
Wednesday	31 August	Semi Finals	TBA
Wednesday	07 September	Finals	TBA

Club Log after 2 weeks

	P	PD	Points
Balanced Score Card			
Randfontein	2	76	33
Diggers	2	44	33
Wes Wits	2	83	30
Harlequins	1	19	20
Wanderers	2	-23	16
Khosa	1	-7	8
JHB Police	1	-48	4
Germiston Simmer	1	-97	4
Inquina	2	-14	1

Above is the overall picture of the Clubs position after 2 rounds of the competition. The way the overall log works is that the points from each team are added together, with the only exception being the 1st XV where the points are doubled before they are added.

Khosa and Germiston Simmer did not play the second round for some reason and have agreed to play for double points in the return fixture.

Sponsors

So far we have not managed to sign up many sponsors for the Club. As most of you are aware there were many promises made, but nothing materialised. We would like to thank the sponsors that have come on board this season

Medsheild, Diggers Pub and Grill, PowerMan, Agri Eco Trading, McCrystal Insurance, Laundrocrats,

We are actively looking for new sponsors and advertisers. Should your company wish to advertise on Republic road for only R1250.00 per month please contact Jonathan on 082 444 5260. All money raised will go directly to improvement of the club – **no commissions will be paid.**