

NOCA Presidents Report 2007

I have pleasure in presenting the President's report for the 2006/2007 season.

The visit by the Otago Volts pre season was a worthwhile and well managed start to the season. As well as showcasing Otago's contracted players in the provinces, the road show is important in raising awareness of cricket as a potential career path for our best young players.

After an absence of twelve years, North Otago hosted the 44th South Island Primary Tournament for 2007. The event was capably organized by Ted Tempero and his Committee with a lot of positive feedback from visiting teams, sponsors and the general public. I would congratulate all players, ground staff, umpires and administrators for their excellent work during the week. This event represents all that is best about grassroots sport in New Zealand and was a credit to those involved. It was also a privilege to have in attendance the President of New Zealand cricket, Don Neely, as well as a number of individuals who have been involved since the tournament's inception and I refer specifically to local sporting identity Neville Hoskin, one of the initiators of the tournament all those years ago.

We are fortunate to have such an able administrator in Peter Cameron as Chairman of North Otago cricket and my thanks to Peter and all those who served on the Management Committee, as well as to our valued sponsors, media and support services. This season, the Management Committee structure was revised with more clearly defined responsibilities for those elected. The benefits should be ongoing, with a more equitable sharing of duties.

In a positive initiative, the Management Committee opted to proceed with the setting up of a stand alone North Otago Cricket website (www.noca.co.nz). As well as showcasing local cricket, the website provides an excellent opportunity to improve communication links between players, clubs and the Association. I strongly recommend all interested parties avail themselves of the opportunity to access this most impressive website.

The Borton Cup and Dick Hunt Rosebowl Competitions were deservedly won by the Valley Cricket Club and the Tui Twenty / 20 Competition by the Albion Club. David Sewell was named both the Club and Representative Cricketer of the year, as well as best bowler in the Borton Cup. It is timely to acknowledge the contribution that David has made to Otago and North Otago Cricket over a distinguished playing career. Now retired from the first class game, it is pleasing to see him regularly turning out for his Oamaru club and leading from the front for North Otago. His outstanding figures against Otago Country suggest a prolonged career yet, if that is David's wish.

The senior representative team completed their season with an outstanding outright result against Otago Country - the opposition being dismissed for just 21. When the best players are available, not always possible, the senior team has proven it has the capability to compete well. The selectors have commented on improved commitment levels from players last season with a healthy blend of experience and youth, assisted by the two non resident player provision. Hopefully this progress can be built on with further success next season.

Although all clubs struggle with playing numbers at times for various reasons, it is worth noting that there would be few population bases in New Zealand as small as that in North Otago who manage to maintain a separate competition and to consistently field age group representative teams, both male and female. My plaudits go to those people in the clubs and to the NOCA volunteers who so willingly devote their time to selecting, coaching and managing teams. The players also benefit from a dedicated group of local umpires who ensure that club, age group and senior representative matches are well covered. The work of our umpires is much appreciated and it was pleasing to see further recognition being given by way of higher appointments. Derek Walker was the recipient of a Prime Minister's Scholarship to England. I would congratulate Derek for again being appointed to the first class umpiring panel and particularly for his work running the Milo visits to schools programme, in his capacity as North Otago District Coach/CDC. The Association has placed considerable coaching resources into the Milo initiative with considerable success. The onus is now on clubs to build on this good work by strengthening the numbers playing the game, especially at intermediate school level. There are many alternative attractions for young sportspeople these days and cricket certainly cannot take itself for granted. A level one coaching course was also offered in Oamaru this season which was well supported.

There remain considerable challenges. With changes to the school terms and daylight saving adjustments, there are issues pending as to the most appropriate format for the club competitions. All clubs need to ensure they are represented on the Management Committee and to take up the opportunity for input.

It will be most disappointing if North Otago is to no longer benefit from regular first class cricket in Oamaru. Centennial Park has traditionally been a popular venue with players and considerable expertise exists in the region in preparing a quality wicket block and in providing an experienced volunteer base for matches. Once lost, this would not easily be regained.

The following players gained higher honors last season. Craig Smith earned a contract with the Volts. Peter Breen and Robbie Smith were members of the Otago Under 19 tournament team. Jordan Horrell, Chris Ware, Ben Cant, Sean Todd and Sean Conlan were selected at Otago Under 15 level. Emma Paton and Tessa Hopkinson were selected for the Otago Secondary schoolgirls.

Finally a tribute to one of Otago's most competent and hardest working administrators, Ted Tempero. A greatly valued Life Member of his club Union, as well as of both the North Otago and Otago Cricket Associations, Ted has indicated he will not be standing for the Management Committee this season, although he will be continuing as Chairman of the Primary Committee and as Russell Payne's assistant at Centennial Park. Ted epitomizes the very best qualities of sports administrators - totally dedicated, unassuming and a true servant to the game. I would thank Ted for his immense contribution to the Management Committee over many years. We shall miss his wisdom and dedicated service.