

SITTER!

The New Zealand soccer fanzine
You wouldn't want to miss it

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\$3



Fanz frustration

The Line Up

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Feedback

Sitter! FC: Sitter! is looking to enter a team in the Chatham Cup this year. And why not? In an era when everyone from pub teams to coffee bars seem to enter and school sides can make the last 16, it's harder to justify not being in t' Cup. We have a number of former All Whites as subscribers, though chances are the playing XI will come down to the usual suspects of fat blokes, nutters, and desperadoes. First round of the Cup is on April 25. Contact Grant Stantiall (07 850-8454) if you're after a game.

Doping/drug cheating is not an issue for New Zealand fans if informal feedback from our article last issue, **Our big drug test failure** -- on the Waitakere player who tested positive for ephedrine -- is any guide. "It's not as if it was a rugby player," one subscriber offered on his renewal form.

PRICE RISE: A 50 per cent increase in air postage to Australia in the past six months means the price of Aussie subscriptions must rise. It's now \$23 for five issues. The New Zealand price of \$3 per copy -- the same since 1995 -- remains.

PROGRAMMES: A reminder that Kingz home programmes are available at \$3 each (\$5 for Australia) from Sitter! merchandising (PO Box 10284 Hamilton or email ronaldo@world-net.co.nz. We make nothing out of this, but it helps out distant followers of the Kingz, and through this service we have already returned hundreds of dollars to the Kingz.

THANKS: Cheers to Chris Turner on behalf of all Kingz super fans for repeatedly sorting out the excesses of security goons and administrative wankers at the Cake Tin. You are a legend CT.

Disclaimer: Sitter! is published about 9 times a year and has been in existence since 1995. It is a fanzine for serious soccer fans, not puddings and tosspots. It is a non profit-making venture kept alive by the passions of a few hardy fans. There is no copyright on anything in Sitter! and in the true fanzine ethos, stuff should be considered fair game for use elsewhere, though it would be nice to see the source acknowledged. Don't try suing us because we haven't got any money. What we make we reinvest in the game. Does anybody read this small print?



The abuse industry

Recent Kingz advertising has reminded me of the old gag about the prejudiced Redneck who exclaims: "There's only two things I can't stand: racism — and blacks".

Let me explain. Here's a quote you'll find most weeks in the Football Kingz programme, Royal Review: *"During a recent home game it is alleged that comments of a racist and derogatory nature were directed towards a Football Kingz player by a member of the opposition. Kingz FC wishes it to be known that the club does not tolerate racism in any form, and fully supports the campaign launched in August 1993 by the British*

Commission for racial equality... entitled Let's Kick Racism out of Football."

Now here's a quote from a Kingz ad in the Herald: *"Abuse Aussies. From \$12. Football Kingz v Sydney Olympic, Friday 7.30pm.* (An earlier Wellington version in the Evening Post added a further \$8 to the minimum price, because, like everything, abuse is dearer at the Cake Tin.)

Double standards? Is being formally invited to abuse somebody on the basis of their nationality that much different from abusing them on the colour of their skin? Either way, is it advisable for a club to publicly encourage derogatory remarks on one hand while sanctimoniously opposing them on another?

To be fair to the Kingz hierarchy, they've only picked up on the fact that us fans are abuse specialists. Bloc 5 have made an art form of manufacturing good-humoured abuse for visiting Australian players, and I've been more than happy to join in. (I particularly like the chant: *"You can stick your gold medals up your arse"* — it's almost as if we're abusing our own inferiority).

You could argue there is a historical place for abuse in soccer.

By the same token, a dash of humour and knowing where to draw the line has always been the saving grace of such abuse.

However when we meet Aussies on the terraces, I've noted a tendency not so much to abuse them as to swap notes and contact details with them; to have a beer with them, or even invite them to stay in some cases. We respect those who have the same passions.

The Kingz keenest supporters see themselves in the mirror when Aussie fans visit. They're motivated by the same emotions.

Interestingly, as I write, six Kiwi fans have chipped in \$50 each to help out Perth Glory fan Richard Stevens, who bought a ticket to Auckland on the understanding that his team would be playing at Ericsson Stadium. To his horror, he discovered the game had been shifted to Christchurch, but when word of his dilemma was heard of, members of the Kingz/Goalnet mailing lists by Kingz chipped in \$50 each to buy a return flight from Auckland to Christchurch to enable Stevens to see the game.

This is a striking example of the camaraderie of fans. As one listee noted, it arose spontaneously at supporter-to-supporter level, and without some corporate organisation thinking about "the main-chance" in the background.

Indeed, this is almost the antithesis of abuse.

Kingz fans are an eccentric but good-natured bunch who are united more by things

they love than things they hate (apart, perhaps, Manchester United).

But keeping “abuse” in perspective could become a problem if Kingz management insist on appealing to the most lumpen elements of society to get along to Ericsson on the pretext its the best place to let rip with a bit of prejudice.

On the subject of dodgy ads, it's probably also timely to revisit the Football Kingz promotional ad, which caused a fair bit of controversy (even by soccer standards) when it debuted last October.

Hundreds complained to Sky about the old reworked gag about goalkeeper Julio Cuello, firstly choosing to catch the ball falling from the burning skyscraper rather than the dog — then the alternate version where he catches the dog only to boot it “upfield”.

The most grievously offended vowed never to watch the Kingz again, blah blah. SPCA members reminded us people are affected by what they see and animal abuse is appalling in New Zealand, yada yada.

At the time it never bothered me (I guess I knew it was all make-believe because Cuello catches something each time, which would never happen in real life). But the more I see this ad the more it annoys me. An ad tells you a lot about the advertiser. If it was “just an ad” then companies wouldn't invest millions in them every year.

So I've come to the conclusion that the Kingz ad *does* promote cruelty — and dishonesty. It's cruel, not to animals, but to Cuello. It's bad enough that the Kingz pulled in, sight-unseen, an inept young goalkeeper who doesn't speak English.

But to then make him the “face” of the Kingz for promotional purposes for the whole campaign when he is, in effect, third-choice custodian is inexcusable. Cruel and unusual punishment of the highest order.

And it's dishonest because the words for the ad start by saying “*Argentinian goalkeeper Julio Cuello plays for the Kingz*”. Patently he doesn't. He watches from the sideline while other keepers play for the Kingz.

This ad is horribly dated. The players in it viewers can most readily identify are Ivan Vichelich (now at Roda), Aaron Silva (who struggles to get a game once every 10 weeks) and Cuello (just another unfortunate Rufer import).

I suggest they dump the ad before Jason Batty's case for unfair dismissal is up on offer in the Employment Tribunal and he calls it as “exhibit A”. The arrival of Cuello, remember, was touted as the reason the Kingz could no longer retain the incumbent All Whites keeper.

To capture the real essence of the Kingz this season they'd be better to pop along to Takapuna Grammar and shoot an ad of the affable Simon Eaddy trying to juggle work as a school teacher with being a Kingz keeper. I envisage a classroom shot of him trying to communicate with his history students with that preposterous red-and-white mouthguard in. But sod it, if they want the full script for how this ad might work, they can buy it off me. I'll donate the money to the next travelling Perth fan I come across.

A colleague gave me some Portsmouth programmes from 1980 a couple of weeks ago. Twenty years on I was taken not just by the degree of information on offer from a club drawing Kingz-sized crowds, but the degree of opinion presented from gaffer Frank Burrows. He was no more eloquent than most managers in saying what he thought about the game, his club and life in general. It was just it starkly indicated the major

flaw in the Kingz home programme.

It too provides information, but there is a complete absence of official "view" from either of the Rufers, and just the most derisory "once-over-lightly" from Chris Turner.

I think the Kingz programme, The Royal Review, is still well short of being a good programme.

Presentation-wise it's a slick enough effort with clean layout and plenty of colour.

It also has plenty of performance statistics, draws, NSL news, and opposition backgrounders.

But where it falls down is with a lack of input from its own club leaders. Coaches or managers column's are a standard feature of programmes worldwide, while the better ones also provide a view by the skipper and/or the club chairman.

Turner does no more than toll the bell with his fortnightly 4-paragraph effort (*welcome to XXX, every team is capable of beating everyone else, we've got the best supporters, enjoy the game...*) while we can only assume providing a coaches' viewpoint is not part of the Rufers' contract.

As a result we learn more about every other club than our own, which is downright criminal given the upsurge of interest in the Kingz.

Personally I'd be fascinated to learn what was on the Rufers' minds, even if it had to be ghost written. As for Turner, there would appear to be plenty he could be communicating to the fans.

What does he think about the demise of Carlton? Could it happen to the Kingz? If not, why not? Does he favour the NSL restructure next season? Hey, what about one of those famous votes of confidence in the coaching staff, even? Anything with a bit of meaning.

Michael Cockerill's (Sydney Morning Herald) column has been dropped this season. This has killed a rich vein of material for the Sitter! Talking Bollocks dept, but is there any reason why somebody else in the wide world of antipodean soccer can't provide a "think piece"?

On the subject of Turner, he's a complex man, isn't he? It's easy to criticise him, but he does have a "feel" for the game. There's not many club managers who would personally back the fans against authority as Turner did in Wellington in getting some of the Bloc 5 into the aftermatch, or standing up for their rights on the terraces.

And I was impressed by his efforts as a comments man for the Kingz away match with Canberra on Radio Sport.

It's highly unusual having the general manager of any professional club acting as comments man when his own team is playing, but to do it in such an expert manner and without trying to tiptoe around the Kingz shortcomings was a real bonus.

Last season I praised House of Football for its remarkable improvement thanks to the civilising influence of Alex de Jong.

It only seems fair to note the show's dire slide over the past few months now that de Jong is no longer on board. The show has increasingly drifted into non-soccer bullshit: musicians at the beach, a day at the tennis, looking around yachts, friends having lunch with Miles Davis, eyeing up "totty".

HoF is starting to suffer from the "cult of personality" in that it is now presumed to be about Miles Davis and Martin Devlin rather than "the game".

Some fans have excused this on the grounds that they work on a limited budget,

time constraints, not enough footage available, to excuse the now-lamentable end product.

I disagree. There's plenty that could be done once you've got your priorities right.

Did you know the night they showed an 8-minute segment of Davis doing a Whicker's World on some yacht in Wellington Harbour, the show actually turned down the opportunity to use footage supplied by soccer broadcaster of the year, Simon Milton, on Bloc 5s epic voyage south for the Wellington match?

Okay, so it might not have exactly been the World Cup final, but I find it ironic that at a time when the mainstream media is celebrating the ambience of soccer's new-found fan culture and picked up on this as the essence of the Kingz impact, HoF has gone the other way.

For no less input and no more cost, I think HoF could be done a hell of a lot better.

I saw the other week somebody had nicknamed HoF "The House of Ego". It's a shame the programme is being allowed to drift. Is there some way fans can apply pressure to get the show back on track?

I was bemused to see the Kingz granted "drinks breaks" during two of their recent trips to Melbourne.

These unusual intrusions on the game were allowed because of worries over "extreme heat".

Good on them for allowing the breaks if that's what the players want. But a couple of things are bugging me about this.

Under what statute did they employ the drinks break? I can't find the regulation in my media kit or in any Fifa statute. Wasn't this the very thing the Yanks were pushing for in the 94 World Cup — the game divided into quarters (they wanted greater TV ad revenue) — which Fifa rejected as not being part of the game as we know it? And remember Jack Charlton & Co being censured for throwing plastic bags of water onto the pitch in Orlando because the game couldn't be stopped?

It reminded me how, a couple of years back the Waikato Referees Association refused to allow rolling subs for junior rep matches, informing us that there was "no such thing" under the laws of the game.

I'd like to hear from readers how the drinks break should be reconciled with international board rulings. After all, soccer is played in far hotter places the world over.

On this subject NSL anorak Alan Clark couldn't point me to any league regulations, but did make a salient point: *"There's a very strong state (Victoria) OHS law which requires a workplace to be safe. If you take a footballer to be an employee, and the pitch to be the workplace, I can understand why the OHS authority might step in if required."*

Of course this could result in the perversity that you have game stoppages where the match is being played by professionals, but in the amateur sense, where competitions are played under a non-employer-employee relationship, there is no such pressure.

Everyone keeps going on about Wynton Rufer, but Mark Burton has been the Kingz stand-out player for me this season. His combination of work-rate and breath-taking skill has impressed me more than any player I've seen since the formation of the club. I hope he finds his way back into Europe. He's too good a player to be hanging around

the Australasian
boondocks.

I've been enjoying television coverage of the Kingz home matches when I can't get to Auckland (okay, Wellington too).

My favourite commentator is of course former Waikato Unicol bad boy Gordon Irving. I love that growly voice he puts on when he gets excited, and he's not afraid of taking a ping at players and coaches, or throwing in the odd sardonic comment.

Fred de Jong offers a useful insight from a player's perspective but they'd be better to get someone else to do the post-match interviews. Fred struggles a bit to spit out his less-than-incisive questions. (Mostly they aren't questions, but empty statements inviting a response.) Whether it's Matthew Cooper, Gavin Larsen, or de Jong doing it, it's all the rage in sports broadcasting these days to have the most recent retiree from the dressing shed hop behind the microphone for a few lame-duck interviews after the game. But poor old Fred must have wished he'd bailed up anyone but Harry Ngata after the Kingz-Sydney United match. After he stumbled his way through his opening gambit, Harry's response was: "Gee Fred, I'd put together three words better than you."

I also thought Lee Jones looked a natural in his one-off cameo for the Wellington match. He was relaxed, convivial and had some sensible contributions. If he can't get over his injuries, there might be an alternate career path for him.

Finally, perhaps some Sitter! reader might like to pop down to the nearest Mission shop and buy the Sky crew some more fashionable jackets. At first I thought those oversize grey prison jobs they wear were a one-off joke, they were wearing for a dare. Apparently not. Bet they turn up on David Hartnell's next list of fashion crimes.

-- **Bruce.**



Ron Anorak's gossip page



SHAFTED: Worst soccer horror injury over the holiday period was the "handicap" picked up by NZ Soccer CEO Bill MacGowan. Bristling Bill was having such a rough day on the golf course he did what any top management type would do and smashed his club on the ground in anger. Sadly he only succeeded in lodging the carbon-fibre shaft through his hand. The recovery operation took over five hours of hospital time if our health sector spies can be believed. Must have looked a sight in the Casualty Dept with that long club shaft poking through.

BLUHMING HELL: Okay, so everybody knows Herr Andy Bluhm missed the Kingz-Sydney Olympic match because he'd had a car accident that week. But what exactly happened? A nose-to-tail job on the Southern Autobahn, perhaps? No, Absent-minded Andy pulled out of his Mt Wellington address and thoughtlessly drove along on the wrong side of the road until... crrrunch.

KING-SHIT: Pre-match entertainment used to be a feature of Kingz home matches. Now it's post-match entertainment which is keeping everyone amused, if ongoing spats between the Chris Turner and John Batty camps are any indication. Was that really Turner being escorted out of the Immortals Lounge at Ericsson Stadium by security guards after the Olympic match?

KING OF KINGZ: Is anybody out there running a book on how long Simon "Heineken" Massey will hold down the post of Kingz CEO? In the old days, it was not unknown for code sponsors like Winfield to release staff in the process of being redundatified, to help soccer out on the promotional side as a painless way of letting employment contracts expire. Now I'm not suggesting Sky TV's move in making their marketing manager the new Kingz chief was less than a noble gesture for the good of the game. The fans love him, but maybe Simon should work on the old professional image a bit. Meanwhile readers can feel free to forward reports of any Kingz staff seen famously knocking back the beers to me, care of this page. (Hey Simon, if you want better press, you really must start returning your calls.)

OCEANIA IS A JOKE, PART XXXV: Tafea FC, the team Wollongong beat in the Oceania club final, was the full Vanuatu national team. They were registered legally... Putting on my righteous voice: So why don't we have the All Whites all play for one club? Oh, that's right, we already do. Sorry. But what is really objectionable about this was having Vanuatu wanker Johnny Tinsley Lulu suddenly declaring a transfer deadline for the Oceania Club Champs once his outfit has signed up its whole international squad.

SOUNDING OFF: Dylan Tate, the Dr Who of the soccer media, has scored a \$5000 NZ on Air grant for Steriogram, an Auckland band that has a single out called Soccerstar. ~~The word is the Bloc 5 lads will be in the recording studios next.~~ ("We only win when we're singing, la la..")

Rufer's recipe

One of our more erudite Sitter! subscribers has come across a stunning piece of Wynton Rufer magic in the Child Heath Research Foundation Celebrity Recipe Book # 6 ...

Wynton Rufer's "Lisa's Thick-crust Pizza with the Lot"

Menu cost per serve: \$1.51 (Er, bear in mind this is about 4-6 years ago -- Cooking Ed.)

Prep time: 50 minutes. **Cook time:** 25-30 minutes

Thick Pizza Crust

1/2 t Sugar; 2/3 cup warm water; 1 T dried yeast; 2 cups flour; 1/2 t salt; 1 T oil.

Topping

1 onion, finely diced; 2 rashers lean bacon, diced; 2 T tomato paste; 50g salami diced; 225g tin pineapple pieces in juice, drained; 1 3/4 cups grated New Zealand cheddar cheese.

Optional: green pepper, diced olives, sliced tomatoes, grated mozzarella cheese

To prepare the base, dissolve the sugar in the warm water. Sprinkle over the yeast and stand in a warm place for 10 minutes. Combine the flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Stir in the yeast mixture and the oil until well combined this can all be done in a food processor]. Knead on a lightly floured surface for 10 minutes until smooth. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover and stand in a warm place for 30 minutes until the dough has doubled in size [or microwave dough on 10% power for 5 minutes, then stand for 10-15 minutes]. While the dough is rising, heat a small heavy-based frypan. Cook the onion and bacon for 4-5 minutes until the onion is clear. Push a clenched fist into the middle of the dough to deflate it and turn onto a lightly floured surface. Roll out to fit a 28cm pizza dish [preferably deep-sided]. Spread the tomato paste over the pizza base then top with the onion and bacon mixture, salami, pineapple and any of the optional ingredients. Lastly, sprinkle the cheese over the top. Bake at 200 degrees C for 25-30 minutes.

Sounds fantastic. Wonder how Alison Holst would do on a celebrity coaching session?

Once again prospects of a New Zealand club winning through to the mega-rich World Club Championships have been snuffed out in an Island hell-hole at the Oceania qualifiers. Former Manawatu captain GORDON GLEN WATSON ponders some...

Lessons from Oceania

Napier City Rovers' defeat at the semi-final stage of the Oceania Club Championships against Vanuatu's club champions illustrated the "grin and bear it" facet attached to the Football Kingz participation in the Australian National Soccer League.

The Football Kingz are competing in the biggest league in 'Oceania', but for the purposes of FIFA's rules and regulations, they are technically not a New Zealand club, and Napier City Rovers have rightfully risen to the top of the pile as New Zealand football's premier club representatives at international level.

There is a degree of frustration having to watch our only professional football club stay home, whilst we send the best of the rest on a mission improbable. It's a case of having your cake, wanting to eat it, the plate, the cutlery and the doillies.

Napier City Rovers involvement in the OCC paralleled a few patterns seen regularly in European club football, as well as underlining a long held misconception that New Zealand has a God-given right to think of itself as one of

the big two in the Oceania Confederation.

Napier went to Papua New Guinea, legitimate champions, NZ double winners, with every football fan at home wishing them all the very best. *(Dunno, Gordy, some of those Mt Wellington types were pretty pissed it wasn't them after winning the "league" section of the league – Ed.)*

The Football Kingz gave us a sneak preview of what we, as a country, could be missing out on, and re-emphasised the gap between the NSL and the NCC with a 'cameo' victory over Rovers leading into the tournament.

Build-up victories over the 'Ole Academy' gave valuable pitch time to Rovers, but would surely not be enough to hone skills and fitness levels to the degree required to conquer Oceania's all comers.

Despite this hardly-ideal build-up, Kiwi expectations are almost always tainted by years of gorging ourselves with victories over Island nations at international level that bare more resemblance to a Samoan cricket score, rather than that of a keenly fought and



evenly contested football match.

A pattern has emerged. A trend has developed. Despite all of the complaints about third world conditions, hostile crowds, hostile opponents, highly questionable refereeing and an aggressive anti-Anzac media campaign, New Zealand's NCC winners have both fallen at the semi-final hurdle, both times to the club champions from Island nations.

Often we hear the UK media feast upon their club's European and international failures. Failures based, in the main, upon bloated, distorted and unrealistic expectations -- usually rooted deep in the retarded "rules the waves" mentality. They say "the apple never falls far from the tree" and perhaps for too long NZ has taken its position of one of Oceania's big two for granted.

It would be churlish and onerous to stretch the comparison further; that Napier and Central's foray into the OCC was a laughable failure, presuming that by special dispensation, they should've won their way to the final at least, with daylight to spare, given any manner of advantages (real or imagined) that they supposedly hold over our Island neighbours.

Evidence of a possible parity between NZ club football and its Island counterpart has presented itself at various times throughout our history. Both Fiji and Papua New Guinea have inflicted near mortal wounds upon the All Whites, recording victories in World Cup qualifiers.

It's a warning that we've taken far too lightly. If "Britannia rules the waves", then her colonial descendant, "Complacency", rides an aquajet and wears a fluorescent thong whose label is bigger than the thong itself.

What do we do? Well, we dispense with this curious belief that anything we do in Australia and New Zealand is automatically "better" than in the Islands.

In two OCC competitions, both Napier and Central have fallen at the semi-final stage. Two-nil in anyone's language is a fairly convincing scoreline.

We can't thrust our trump card, the Football Kingz, into the mix. Even blurring the rules of eligibility would only serve to work against their presence in the NSL, a crucial ingredient in at least maintaining some degree of international superiority over local rivals.

Inclusion of the Football Kingz in the NCC, ostensibly to legitimise their presence in the OCC (assuming they'd win the NCC, of course!) would only see the current playing staff leave quicker than Charlie Dempsey at a World Cup love-in.

What we can do is bridge the gap. We're already in the slow process of doing this through the development of a regional Federation League, played at the end of the NCC club season.

NZ Soccer could inject the NCC winning club side into the league as preparation for the OCC, or, change the criteria altogether, and send the winners of the Federation Regional League, which would answer the questions over Island "clubs" comprising Regional selects, rather than bona fide club sides.

Either way, what this points to, is the necessity for a year-round domestic calendar for New Zealand football.

We've been handed a football lesson by the Islands, whether we like it or not, and our response to this is vitally important.

Napier's narrow 1-0 defeat by Wollongong gave hope to fans back home, only to be blasted into pieces by the deflating loss in the semi-final to Vanuatu's Tafea.

Only when Wollongong play their opening match in Spain, scene of New Zealand football's finest hour, will we feel the pinch.

Stay informed

The best way to keep up with soccer happenings in New Zealand is, er, not through Sitter! as it happens, but on the GOALNET mailing list.

To join soccer's premier internet mailing list, head your browser to:
www.topica.com/lists/goalnet

Stand Up If You Love the Kingz

\$15 (inc P&P)



The Kingz inaugural season review, published By Michael (Stack) Stephen and Grant Stantiall, is now available.

It features match reviews from every game of the Kingz inaugural season, colour action photographs, fan photographs and comments, media comments, FIFA comments, player profiles and comments as well as statistics.

It is NOT an official Football Kingz publication, however it has their support.

It is primarily done by fans for the fans, but the appeal will cross all barriers.

Contact ronaldo@world-net.co.nz to reserve your copy.

Please make cheques out to:

Soccermag Publishing, PO Box 10284, Te Rapa HAMILTON

In Command

with
**Peter
Commandeur**

From the "**Football in Ancient Egypt**" series, watch for: "**Mysteries of the Valley of the Kingz**"... how two aging soccer brother Gods defy football-coaching death for two seasons before being buried beneath the wreckage of their reign.

One is partially-mummified but still walks the soccer field at the age of 38, a living legend, so old you can hear his joints creak, despite the application of special balms by the team priests at half-time. Eventually King Ruferses I is fully mummified and is permanently-parked on the side-line at Ericsson Pyramid as team mascot.

His brother King Ruferses II disappears from the history books into football oblivion, after fielding an entire Kingz team of mediocre Argentinian goal-keepers who can't communicate with each other or the coach and disastrously want to all go to the toilet before a match, with tragic results on the pitch (and not just *the score-line*).

*This is what happened: crossword clue: 3 across the back: "Che Bunce is s**t on the ground and this is what the Argie keepers left behind", (and they weren't even: like 2 down:"at least Che Bunce and airline hostesses are good in the a*r").*

No one was ever able to decipher the Ruferses coaching hieroglyphs on the

ancient dressing room walls: a lot of arrows going around in circles and numbers growing progressively larger, like: 0-5, 0-8, 0-10, 0-16, 0-22, until finally there's a hieroglyph showing a hand from the Sky ripping-up a piece of paper and a new King arriving, then the numbers are reversed and signs like "Kingz rule the NSL." appear.

Scholars later decide that something called "Bloc 5" must have been the intellectuals of the day.

But, mysteries of today: why don't they try Aaron Silva up front if he's fit and the other strikers are not producing the goods? Seems stupid not to even give him a chance. Why bring in imports if you don't use them?

Do they just like having exotic names around on the team roster? Maybe logic just doesn't come into it?

I'm not impressed with Dennis Ibrahim. I think he's a waste of time. For the record, last year in German Div 2 he scored six goals in 38 games to help his Fortuna Koln club to relegation. And I'm not impressed with commentator Gordon Irving, who on Radio Sport following the Sydney United match in Wellington said he thought Ibrahim was one of the Kingz better players. Don't think so.

Footage of Simon Elliott's LA Galaxy winning House of Football was shown on ESPN's Football Extra on January 27. is useless at covering New Zealand soccer. it reminded me of how useless House of Football is at covering New Zealand Soccer. It could have screened this, but instead ran a 5-minute feature on the BT Global Challenge yacht race.. Pathetic! If I wanted to watch yacht racing I'd watch another show on Sky Sport.

Strange also that Aussie NSL highlights screen on British TV (source: The Times weekly TV Extra), but not here, when we have a team in the league. Come on Sky — screen the thing and maybe

profile of the league will increase.

DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS

COVER DEPT: What a laugh it was to see Joe McGinniss' book *"The Miracle of Castel di Sangro"* (reviewed in *Sitter!* last year) about the small-time Italian footy team, placed in the "spirituality" section of the specials brochure from the In Print Book Club. That's the beauty of having the word "miracle" in the title. Still, it's a good buy, reduced from \$50.95 (hardback) to \$21. (Ph 09 479-2200). Bloody miracle, that.

JOE WATCH: All White coaching non-legend Joe McGrath has been appointed coach of newly-promoted Kilkenny City in the League of Ireland, after manager Pat Byrne quit the club for the second time, having been in constant trouble with the League over non-payment of fines and criticism of referees. At least our Joe is too smooth for that sort of strife.

Meanwhile Joe's former club Bohemians is the talk of Ireland: eg. *"Didn't Joe McGrath once coach that mighty club?"* (Only joking).

Staggering Bollocks from Billy Harris (Sunday Star-Times, Feb 4: "(Vicelich)...had a clause in his contract putting a ceiling of \$100,000 on any future transfer. This safeguarded him against the Kingz setting an exorbitant fee, a situation which is restricting many top Australian players from playing in Europe. A low transfer fee, or better yet a free one, also often means some of the money a club saves on the transfer can go to the player."

Hmmm. So, that's why there are over 100 Aussies playing professionally in Europe. And why some, (like Ivan Ergic, ex-Perth and aged only 19 and not a senior Aussie international at the time) sign for Euro clubs for over \$A1 million. (in Ergic's case \$ 1.5m). Danny Hay went to Leeds for \$A600,000. \$NZ100,000 is what Euro clubs pay for a 16-year-old amateur, not a full international of many

games aged 24!

OCEANIA IN EUROPE: Aussie players tend to get all the attention, but as well as our own Danny Hay, there are Pacific Islanders doing very well: Maharama Vahirua from Tahiti is one of the top-scorers in French Div.1 this season at Nantes (2nd on table). His father was a star in France in the seventies and played for France in the early 80s. Christian Karembeu from New Caledonia has been a star in France, Italy, Spain and now at Middlesbrough (*note correct spelling: not "borough" as previously in Sitter!, a common mistake, but shame on Brit import Ron Griffiths in last issue!*), for some time. An Aussie to watch is the Parramatta player from last season's NSL, Mille Sterjovski, suddenly emerging as one of the best players in France at second-place Lille. Sometimes we don't realise how good some of the NSL players are. Brett Emerton and Steve Laybutt from last season's NSL are going great guns at Feyenoord, leading the Dutch table.

And here's some detail about Ivan Vicelich's Roda J.C. (might stand for "jockey club" I recall): Roda has 14 foreign players this season (World Soccer, Dec squad lists). Looking at squad lists for 1995-96 season (before Bosman ruling) they had only 4 foreigners then. Now amongst highest number of foreigners of any club in the world (except Man.Utd & Chelsea of course). Roda is in Limburg province in the south, near where Fred de Jong played at Sittard. Usually a top 6 team and a breeding ground for Dutch internationals.

Any Kingz fans making the trek to Christchurch for the Kingz game on March 2 should note that Braham's Backpackers in Hanmer is offering accommodation to *Sitter!* readers for \$4 a night for a package of eight beds. Phone Rob Braham (former Christchurch Utd player) on (03) 315-7424.

Kingz in court

The Batty decision

By BRUCE HOLLOWAY

Two issues ago Sitter! -- totally oblivious to media norms in regard to sub judice matters (we're only a bleedin' fanzine, you know) --boldly predicted John Batty would win his legal stoush over money owned from the Football Kingz. It duly transpired following a case heard in the High Court in Auckland on November 30, with a judgement delivered on January 19, that he was awarded the \$45,000 he sought from Sky, plus \$3000 in costs.

Here's how it unfolded. Through his company Ay & Jay Ltd, Batty sought payment for his services between July 1999 and May 19 2000.

The Football Kingz denied the indebtedness on several grounds. Firstly they presented the rather specious argument that there was a substantial dispute as to the identity of the parties to the contract for Batty's services (that his contract was between the Kingz and himself, with payment merely made to Ay & Jay Ltd to take advantage of tax losses).

Then there was their contention that Batty's remuneration package, agreed in July 1999 was only to operate until January 2000, and lastly that Batty was in breach of contract because of poor performance.

During the due diligence process preceding Sky's purchase of the majority shareholding in the Kingz, director Ted Midlane advised Batty was an employee. But Batty rendered accounts for his services and was paid by the Kingz.

When making those payments the Kingz paid GST (consistent with being an independent contractor) and failed to deduct PAYE tax (inconsistent with a contract of employment).

Noel Barkley also contracted his services to the Kingz through a company, which indicated there was no objection in principle to such an arrangement.

Judge Kennedy-Grant subsequently found the Kingz failed to establish a genuine and substantial dispute as to the identity of the parties to the contract. (If Batty had been an employee the Kingz would have been in breach of taxation laws, assisting the defrauding of Inland Revenue.)

Judge Kennedy-Grant also quickly debunked the Kingz claim that under remuneration agreements Batty would not be entitled to payment after January 2000. Chris Turner was the main source of evidence in the Kingz argument against paying Batty.

Turner presented an affidavit to the court saying remuneration would be reviewed in January 2000, with no entitlement to payment after this date.

However along with Batty, Barkley saw it differently. Here's an excerpt from his (Barkley's) affidavit:

"I recall at that meeting that there was some discussion that the payments that were agreed to for all parties would be looked at in the New Year, but that was a general comment and no resolution to that effect was passed."

It didn't help that the Kingz could not present any written record of such a review.

Further, on April 4 Ted Midlane -- also solicitor for the Kingz in the early stages of this case as well as being a founding director -- wrote to Sky financial controller Paul Smart advising on-going salaries were due to directors up to the date of resignation together with reimbursement of their out-of-pocket expenses. "The purpose of this letter is to notify Sky in writing that those amounts are in fact due."

In his judgement Kennedy-Grant wrote: "having regard to the evidence as a whole, I find the defendant (Kingz) has failed to show a genuine and substantial case that the July 1999 agreement regarding remuneration automatically ended in January 2000."

In his affidavit Smart said the Kingz had "no obligation to pay him anything for his services after (January 2000). But, he went on: "I did tell him, if Sky acquired an interest in the defendant (Kingz) it would try and arrange for Mr Batty to receive some payment if he continued performing his duties.

Batty's version was Smart said Sky required him to stay, but believed the Kingz were paying too much for his services. Batty told Smart if that was the case, if Sky paid him what he was owed and made him an offer for the future, he would decide whether to accept it.

At the time the Kingz were in the middle of the soccer season and Batty was fulfilling an essential role. Sky made Batty an offer on May 19 and he did not accept it.

Sadly for the Kingz, Smart did not live up to his name. His evidence varied significantly from affidavit to affidavit, with his version of events in his "evidence in reply" meaning Batty would have had to work between February and May 2000

without any certainty of remuneration.

In Smart's second version of what happened, there was no agreement that the amount due for Batty's services to the end of January would not be paid. Yet that was the stance taken on May 19.

As to whether there was a breach of contract by Batty, Judge Kennedy-Grant found the Kingz had not established a sufficiently strong case.

This is hardly surprising. The first time Batty heard complaints of his service was in a solicitor's letter on August 1, 2000, in response to the service of a statutory demand on the Kingz.

Barkley countered Smart's evidence of mismanagement by Batty, and the Kingz were unable to quantify losses suffered as a result of this supposed mismanagement.

Judge Kennedy-Grant said that having failed to comply with the statutory demand served on it, the presumption was the Kingz were insolvent.

The Kingz ability to meet its debts as they fall due is dependant upon the backing of Sky Network Television, the judge wrote.

But he wasn't convinced by undertakings Sky had given were sufficient to displace insolvency presumptions.

"However, in order to ensure the Kingz were "not exposed to the consequences of allowing the proceeding to continue when, with the assistance of Sky Network Television Ltd, it may be able to pay the debt... I propose to give it the opportunity to make such payment and thereupon obtain an order staying the liquidation proceeding.

The Kingz were ordered to pay Batty the money by February 7.

The fact that this case went to court suggests the initial lack of professionalism at the Kingz has been superceded by corporate stupidity.

Memories of the shit founding director

Noel Robinson had to go through to get his money are still fresh, and it appears Sky have brought no more common sense to the club.

Relationships have soured all round, despite the brave face Turner puts on things

Barkley, who was useful in offsetting the evidence Turner and Smart produced to try and nobble Batty, settled his own payout with the Kingz as part of a package deal in which Sky bought his shares.

I understand Turner had no such problems with money owed by the Kingz for services rendered because his name had been added to "player payments" account which were processed through Ted Midlane's office.

Batty, who can be still found most match nights in the Immortals Lounge at

Ericsson, held out against Sky's offer of a buyout, choosing to retain his 5 per cent holding in the Kingz.

"Simon Massey told me that he'd see my blood and guts all over the floor in court," Batty said.

"But ethically, morally, whatever way you look at it, I was entitled to my money.

"When Sky took over they never ever sat down with the four directors at any time to work out what was good, bad or needed to change about the way the club was being run.

I tried to ask Kingz CEO Simon Massey for his analysis of what the court decision meant for the credibility of Kingz management practices, let alone whether it left him feeling concerned about his own future. As is his fashion, Massey did not return my calls.

Upcoming

New Zealand Soccer could be heading back to the Merdeka Cup in Malaysia or off to South America to warm-up for the All Whites' World Cup campaign. The decision to pull the All Whites out of the Millennium Cup in India has left the side short on international match play in the lead-up to their cup qualifiers in June, though subsequent scandals and cock-ups there have perhaps justified the decision.

NZ Soccer has sent faxes to Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile requesting games, and hoping to arrange three matches in a 10-day tour. Japan and Korea are back-up options.

Ken Dugdale has drawn up a provisional list of 30 players.

The Australian-based World Cup qualifying group, which includes Tonga,

Samoa, Fiji and American Samoa, will be played in April.

The second pool, based in Auckland and including Tahiti, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands, will begin on June 4.

Oceania has insisted that all matches must be played in the afternoon because it will be "too cold" at that time of the year for night games.

Full marks to NZS CEO Bill MacGowan for pointing out the hypocrisy of such a ruling considering Napier's 38 degree-plus experiences in Papua New Guinea.

Oceania winners in World Cup qualifying will play the fourth-placed South American team at home and away for a place in next year's cup finals in Japan and Korea.

National league returns to Tauranga

After an absence of 4 years, national league soccer is back in the Bay of Plenty.

After winning the northern premier league for two consecutive years Tauranga City United AFC has been accepted into the national league this year, with its first fixture set for Links Ave on April 1.

The road to national league hasn't always been easy for the club.

But faced with constant league changes over the past few years, Tauranga has worked hard to achieve national status by doing the basics right. It's established a strong, committed administrative base. And like losing, winning becomes a habit. Playing from Links Avenue, once the home of the now defunct Mt Maunganui AFC, means Tauranga now has one of the best soccer facilities in the country.

News that Tauranga had been accepted into the league came too late for coach Larry Seales to tap up a number of young players with links to the region because they had already signed for other clubs.

But Tauranga will largely be built around the core of experienced – some would say aged players such as Paul Probert, Kevin Manville, Tony Valentine,

Brett Derry, and Dion Bartosh.

Geoff Rickard has returned from overseas and brought exciting Japanese striker Katsu Kawamaru with him. Alastair Frost has moved north from Nelson, while James Pamment, perhaps unfairly nominated for the Sitter! Fat XI in 1998, is back between the sticks.

No Waikato players have been enticed over the Kaimais at the time of writing. That's probably a practical expression of how artificial the Federation concept is in treating Waikato and Bay of Plenty as a homogenous unit.

But it also reflects the fact that Tauranga aren't big on player payments.

"We're quietly getting on with it and we'll be happy not to come bottom," Seales says.

"We'll give it a rip. We've won two in a row at northern level, so it will be a good challenge for these guys."

On the lack of interest from Waikato players -- none had attended training or trialled at the time of writing -- he was disappointed. "I thought there would have been one or two who wanted to extend themselves."

In warm-up matches Tauranga beat the Vanuatu Under 20 side (*Wonder if they all came from Tafea – Ed*) 4-0, the Ngaruawahia by the same score.

Dunedin Tech

Season 2000 review

This video, over two hours long and compiled by Soccer Media broadcaster of the year Simon Milton, features footage of every NCC side from this season. Highlights of 14 Tech NCC matches, THAT NCC semi and the replay, as well as Tech's four Chatham Cup fixtures this season. Cost is \$35, plus \$5 p&p for those outside Dunedin. Quality domestic football on a professional production tape. Contact Milts at: interfanatic@excite.com or 025-201-5164

New T Shirts

In conjunction with Waikato KINGZ and Bloc 5 (McIlroy Productions), Sitter! has produced the all new singing-and-dancing...

BLOC 5 ON TOUR T Shirt

Simply fab to wear round your town, city or farm. Pull the chicks or pull the blokes, you'll be the talk of the country getting spotted wearing one of these babies. Show where your heart lies, even if you can't make Football Kingz matches at Ericsson Stadium, be SEEN in the new Bloc 5 on Tour T shirt! We have a limited range in sizes M, L, XL, XXL.

The shirts are white with the Bloc 5 on tour logo on the front left hand side (in red and black print) with the colour map showing the move from North Harbour Stadium [Camelot] to Ericsson Stadium [Colditz] on the back.

The Sitter! fanzine logo is on the right hand sleeve. To order this exclusive tee shirt please send \$22 (incl postage and packing) to:

Waikato KINGZ, PO Box 10284, Te Rapa HAMILTON.

Any bets on another 11-team national league?

Caversham United is taking New Zealand Soccer to arbitration in an effort to overturn the decision to exclude them from this year's national league. The dispute between Caversham and NZS began last November after NZS invited Tauranga City, rather than Caversham, to take Nelson Suburbs' vacated spot in the national league.

Nelson were forced to withdraw from the league with financial problems, while Caversham's grievance revolves around the fact they beat Tauranga City in a playoff at the end of last season to earn the right to a one-off match against the bottom-placed national league side, Metro.

Caversham lost the match 2-3 but believe that as the next best team, they should have been invited into the national league when a place became available. Now a legal arbitrator is being asked to have a say.

Chairman Colin Anderson said the club's lawyers believed they had a strong case.

"With their decision they're trying to turn the national league into a federation league instead of a national league — that's just wrong."

Anderson had no wish to see Tauranga City "kicked out" of the league. "We're quite happy for Tauranga to stay in, but we want to be in as well." He would not elaborate on the evidence Caversham will use to make its case in arbitration. A date for the hearing will be set once NZS receives Caversham's letter. The national league is due to start on April 1.

Sitter! back issues

Back issues are still available of most editions of Sitter! (though copies of issues 1-15 are running out fast -- apart from issues 11 & 5). Check out the quality writing which won us the Fanzines' World Cup in 1998 and the articles which gained us international notoriety. Send \$3 per copy, to 11 Thames St, Hamilton. (Cheques payable to B Holloway).



Our history

Because a comprehensive history of New Zealand soccer has never been compiled, those interested in our past are indebted to the efforts of Don Service — one of our older contributors – in collating a fascinating series of recollections about the game from years gone by. In his latest offering, he examines...

The China Syndrome

When I was growing up in the 1940s and 50s, lots of Aucklanders still remembered the Chinese Universities team of 1924.

They all agreed on two things. First, that the visitors, although showing good speed and ball control, were too hesitant in going for the tackle, and secondly, that there was a huge crowd at the Auckland Domain.

This aroused my interest, and I did some browsing among old newspapers and magazines in the Auckland Central Library.

It soon became apparent that this long tour of 22 matches was a major sporting attraction at the time, drawing an aggregate of approximately 150,000 people. Some of the crowds, like say 4500 at Wanganui, might well still be records.

People seemed to be fascinated by the novelty of seeing exotic oriental footballers. The only visits before that had been New South Wales in 1904 and Australia in 1922.

At the numerous civic receptions, banquets and smoke concerts arranged, ref-

erence was often made to Rudyard Kipling's lines "Oh East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet".

Fears of "the yellow peril", rife at the time, seem to have been set aside, although the Auckland mayor, amid his welcoming utterances did manage to say: "We don't want to be over-run with your people, and you will appreciate our point of view".

An ad in the "Sporting and Dramatic Review" said: "*Association Football. The Captivating Chinese. Slick! Wily! Sporting!! Domain (this word 16 times). Saturday (10 times). Don't miss this international attraction.*"

Ads appeared every day for a week in the Herald before the August 9 game, saying: "*Three minute bus service from the Post Office to the Domain; special train service from all parts.*"

Here's an excerpt from the Herald report: "*Chinese Soccer Tour – Defeated by Auckland – Score Five Goals To One – The Visitors too gentle – Great Attendance at Domain – The Chinese Universities association football team played the Auck-*

land representatives at the Domain on Saturday afternoon, the attendance being estimated at 28,000. The Auckland Chinese community was well represented. With the playing area in perfect condition, and almost a touch of spring in the air, the picturesque cricket ground presented a wonderful sight.

"Although the game could not be described as a thrilling exposition of the code, play was at times brilliant, and always well worth watching. These lithe young representatives of modern China have yet to learn the finer points of association football, but in many departments of the game they are already adepts.

"Probably never before have Aucklanders witnessed such deft footwork and smart recovery when beaten for the ball... they failed in being too gentle. Invariably when the forwards were attacking and the ball got beyond their reach, they stood off and allowed the opposing backs to clear... Their shooting for goal, too, lacked vim and crispness, while the halfbacks often lay too far back... Halftime 3-0.

"China's goal was a great piece of play and brought forth unstinted applause."

A separate little article on the leader page also made good reading – *"Traffic to the Domain – The Great football Crowd – Special measures were taken by the City Traffic Department to control the unusually large crowd which assembled at the Domain on Saturday... Traffic officers directed the streams of vehicular and pedestrian traffic along Park Rd prior to the match, and thus managed to keep the huge mass moving without hitch or confusion. Grafton Bridge was closed to ve-*

hicular traffic between 4.15pm and 5.15pm, cars and charabanc being diverted into Grafton Rd to facilitate the passage of the crowd toward the city at the close of the match."

Were there really 28,000 there? Four or five other publications, probably copying from the Herald, said so. The Auckland Star said "about 20,000". But Wellington's Evening Post said "28,000 paid for admission" which sounds kind of official. In much later years, a figure of 26,000 was several times quoted.

I've only come across one picture

which shows something like the full extent of the crowd, in the NZ Pictorial News. From this and other photos it's clear that there was a closely packed mass of people standing on the big grass slope between the grandstand and the hospital which wasn't so broken up with trees and pathways in those days.

The crowd also extended a fair way along the slope on the other side of the stand.

The same old grandstand is still there, with a plaque on the inside back wall commemorating Charlie Kerr, who played cricket at the ground for over 60 years.

But the steep little staircase in front was demolished in the 1950s, when the level of the ground in front was raised and the terraced seating there remodelled. (Soccer has been played at the Domain for over a century.)

The following Wednesday the Chinese beat Rotorua 2-1 at Arawa Park. Then came the first test at the Domain on August 16. An advertisement said: *"The Chinese are putting on their strongest team, with the avowed intention of winning the*

The Auckland mayor, amid his welcoming utterances did manage to say: "We don't want to be over-run with your people, and you will appreciate our point of view".

first test – WHAT HAVE THEY UP THEIR SLEEVES??? – the last opportunity of seeing the captivating Chinese in action, and the only opportunity of seeing the famous NZ reps who so successfully toured Australia last season!!”

The Chinese had back their captain and vice-captain who had missed the Auckland game through injury. From the Herald: “Although threatening weather undoubtedly affected the attendance, it was estimated that fully 15,000 spectators were present (The Evening Post said 18,000). After an early goal to New Zealand the visitors set up vigorous and brilliantly clever attacks on the NZ goal which roused the big crowd to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.”

New Zealand eventually won 2-1, but “on the day it must be conceded that the visitors played better class football... the local team had a great advantage in weight and many contend that it was entirely due to this that they wore their lighter opponents down”.

In spite of their poor record (won 4, lost 12, drew 6, goals for 31, against 52) the Chinese actually did rise to the occasion in the test matches.

In this they were helped by Colin Reid, a Wellington man who was seconded to the team to help Wong Tin Sik with the coaching after the first few matches.

They drew the second test 2-2 at the Basin Reserve. One account said they had the ball in the net for a third goal right at the end, but the referee ruled time was up.

The visitors lost the third test 5-3 at Carisbrook, and the fourth test 4-2 at Lancaster Park.

When Canterbury beat China 3-2 before “about 10,000” at Lancaster Park, the locals “scored two goals in quick succession as a result of offside play... There was no doubt that Frickleton was offside both times... two of the Chinese

left the field in a huff, but were prevailed upon to return... There were wild scenes at the close of the game. Hoots and cheers from thousands of voices produced an unearthly din as the players boarded the charabanc to be conveyed to their hotel.

“The referee (Mr G Black) came in for rounds of persistent booing. Sympathy seemed to be entirely with the visitors. The ref was upon the first seat of the bus, apparently very uneasy.

“There were cries of ‘haul him out’, ‘throw him off’. There was an attempt to pull the ref down. The police then pushed their way through and kept the noisiest section at bay... The Chinese called for cheers for Canterbury.”

Chinese teams also toured Australia in 1923 and 1927, the first team drawing 43,000 to one game at the Sydney Cricket Ground. This record wasn't beaten until England drew 46,000 for the first test at the SCG in 1951. (After beating the Cook Islands 17-0 recently, the Aussies probably didn't want to be reminded England beat Australia 17-0 in the second test at Sydney in 1951.)

On the Monday before the Auckland v China game, Canada, who were passing through after a tour of Australia, played Auckland at Carlaw Park No 2 ground.

In pouring rain before a tiny crowd the teams drew 1-1.

Ray Braithwaite, one of the Auckland players, claimed later that it even snowed. Jack Batty played for Auckland, but for the first test versus China the selectors preferred another Aucklanders, Reg Craxton, who had been in the New Zealand team in Australia the previous year.

The Canadians came here again in 1927 for 23 games, losing only two and drawing one.

They were very popular, but didn't draw crowds quite as big as the Chinese.

NEXT ISSUE: Don Service revisits the 1927 Canadian Tour.

Short passes

Andre Zlotkowski has an important web site under construction on New Zealand's international records at www.geocities.com/newzealandfooty. About time.

Ryan Nelsen has been in Belgium for trial, playig in front of scouts from Grasshoppers, Twente and Hereenveen. Before signing for DC United, **Ryan Nelsen** was named as the 2000 Collegiate Men's NSCAA/adidas Player of the Year. And co-MLS draftee **Duncan Oughton** (Fullerton) was named on Soccer America's College Men's NCAA Div 1 Leaders table coming in at 18th with 17 goals and 8 assists for 42 points from 21 games with a 2.0 per game average. Whew. Don't you just love the Yank statomania?

Ross Goodacre (Clemson) was named on the Soccer America NCAA Div 1 leaders, 8th in the USA on assists with 9 assists from 15 games for 0.6ppg. Former All White boss **Bobby Clark** is on the move to Notre Dame after turning Stanford into one of the top USA College Soccer teams.

Simon Elliott is off to the World Club Championships in Sapin in July-August after LA Galaxy won the Football Confederation Championships Cup Final with a 3-2 win over Olimpia of Honduras. Elliott has also taken on a new role and agreed to write a column for the America Youth Soccer Organisation called "Simon Says". Maybe we'll try and tap him up as well.

Former Waitakere man **Roger Noll** was named on the top Keepers list of the College 2000 players (coming in at 19th with 18 goals against. 0.88 GAA from 19 games) but broke his leg while in New Zealand on holiday. Meanwhile **Johnny Foundoulakis** is due to have knee surgery.

Gavin Wilkinson is playing for Kilkenny City (Premier Div, Eircomm League), managed by ex-Sitter! cover pin-up Joe McGrath.

Former national league midfielder **George Morris** has been confirmed as Christchurch City's new coach, takign over from **Ian Marshall**, who is managing the New Zealand U20 side. Morris has had extensive coaching experience with Caversham, Roslyn-Wakari and Cashmere. He will be assisted by Neil Lilley and John Brown.

Ivan Vicelich looks to has hit the jackpot at Roda JC, becoming one of New Zealand's higherst-paid sports stars. His 4-year signing has brought money to him, NZ Soccer, the Kingz and even a "development fee" to Central United, which is all good stuff. Question is, in these sort of cases, should a fee also go to Waitakere City, who were the club who really developed him, giving him his national league debut as a 16-year-old in 1992?

SOCCER NO 1 AGAIN: Charlie Dempsey's non-vote in the 2006 World Cup venue decider has been voted New Zealand's top sports story of 2000. A poll of sports journalists by Market Intelligence had Charlie's abstention ranking 17 points clear of the America's Cup Regatta, with the Sydney Olympics third and David Tua fourth. **Mid-Canterbury United** has been invited to play in an expanded Federation League. 12 teams to compete in Fed. 6 Premier League, covering Canterbury, Mid-Canty, Marlborough & Nelson. But it will revert to 10 teams in 2002. Mid-Canty Utd was formed after a merger of the Ashburton & Collegiate clubs.

Karl Budgen, 1999 Junior All White is back after his Virginain soccer scholarship turned sour. He's signed for Melville, while former Western Suburbs keeper Ryan Sanford is also trying to secure a berth.

Behind the scenes at Kingz training, Part 1...



They said it...

Quotable quotes from the world of soccer

"We were 10 minutes late kicking off because they couldn't find the corner posts, would you believe. At one stage we were going to cut the stem of an umbrella in half and put a couple of rags on top of each end." — **Wollongong Wolves chairman Joe Cachia on organisation at the Oceania club champs.**

"It's all in the mental... Like I said, it's all in the mental."

— **Shane Rufer, interviewed on Sky before the Newcastle-Kingz match. He's dead right, of course. It is "all in the mental" with the Rufers.**

"Wellington is certainly a viable, long-term option. We've only made a commitment to Ericsson Stadium until the end of the season and there is a strong school of support for moving permanently to Wellington." — **Chris Turner tries to talk up attendances prior to the Sydney United match in Wellington. Maybe it's all in the mental for Turner as well.**

"Unless a bomb has been dropped by the Germans on your football ground, you don't move stadiums. How is a person supposed to have any ownership of the club? One of the things that I love about supporting the Kingz is that you feel like the club knows you and needs your support."

— **Cheryl Mason, Kingz FC mailing list, Jan 16.**

"There's no chance of a permanent deal because we can't afford Chris. Most players are out of our price range at the moment."

— **Wrexham manager Brian Flynn reluctantly sends loan striker Chris "Kiwi" Killen back to Manchester City (Wales' Western Mail, December 11). The point here is Kid Killen must be doing okay financially if a second division club can't afford a teenager in its first-team squad. Thanks to the anonymous Taffy-watcher who sent us the clipping. Sitter! truly has global tentacles these days.**

"If Soccer New Zealand are going to have a national league they really have to let the league find its own level. The way they are deciding at the moment is purely speculative. Things have to be left to the teams on the field."

— **Dr Robyn Jones, the new director of football for Federation 7 uses his appointment announcement to criticise New Zealand Soccer's decision to overlook Caversham in favour of Tauranga for this year's national league.**

"I've always thought highly of MLS and the level of play here is very good. From what I saw in Europe, there wasn't much of a difference at all and in fact, some of the guys here are better."

— **Ryan Nelsen on signing for DC United in Major League Soccer. (When Grasshoppers used its final foreign spot on a Brazilian striker, Nelsen chose MLS over a second Swiss club that was interested.)**

Reviews

A collector's item

Stand Up if You Love the Kingz. By Grant Stantiall and Michael Stephen. \$12.50. Soccer Publishing NZ. Reviewed by Bruce Holloway.

It's been one of the great ironies of the Football Kingz that since the advent of our first professional soccer club the most "professional" performers have been not the players, coaches or administrators, but their fans -- who are of course amateurs.

Their eclectic groupings -- Bloc 5, Bloc 23 Library, the Tunnel Rats -- have done more for the Kingz legend than any other arm of the club. "Consumption" of soccer has become arguably more exciting than "production" of soccer at Ericsson.

So it's no surprise that the first piece of substantial literature on the Kingz should come not from the club itself or the professional journalist sector, but from a couple of hardcore fans, webmaster Mike (Stack) Stephen, and my Sitter! associate Grant Stantiall.

Their A4-sized 110-page look-back at the Kingz debut season is described as an "unofficial" review. As Stack notes in his introduction, other clubs around the world have an infrastructure that produces such reviews, but because it's "early days" the Kingz don't. So they took up the

challenge themselves, though there's little here that would have stopped it coming under the "official" umbrella as far as I can see.

To put this effort into a wider perspective, I simply can't imagine New Zealand rugby, league, netball or cricket fans producing their own season review. Of course they wouldn't have to. They have professional journalists catering for those markets.

By contrast soccer has a barren literary landscape in New Zealand. Apart from the odd club "occasion" tome from Jeremy Ruane, and Sitter! (Yes, yes, *Boy Gorge*, we know it's

not as funny as it used to be -- Humour Ed) there's nothing happening out there. To a certain extent this is being offset by the lively new wave of websites and internet chat forums, but it's still not quite the same as being able to pick something up off the coffee table.

So *Stand Up if You Love the Kingz* represents something of a nodal point in the renaissance of fan culture in New Zealand soccer.



How it sells – they've done 3000 copies – may determine the shape of future projects, but this is an excellent first-up effort by two publishing novices.

The review offers a cross-section of fan comment including a typically rambling offering from our own eccentric Wombat, in which he even finds space to somewhat prophetically mull the question of whether Shane Rufer *"would ever attempt to grow back his trademark 70s moustache"*.

There's an interview with captain Harry Ngata, player profiles, contributions from Gordon Irving, Miles Davis, Jeremy Ruane, Trevor Rowse, a spread of photos and even a message from Dino Menillo.

Hamilton fan David Cross explains how he got the Kingz bug, and his tale is offset by a delightful riposte from his soccer widow. But my favourite contribution comes from Bloc 5 choirmaster Richard McIlroy, who recalls the days when there were just three of them singing at Albany. *"We couldn't imagine that the lads would want to play in deathly silence, and yet our attempts at mass karaoke only seemed to clear the rows in front of us..."*

While the review is fan-driven, Stack & Stan still manage to big-note it, with a message from Michel Zen-Ruffinen (Fifa general secretary, dummy), who calls them the "Auckland" Kingz, and a bizarre note from our mate Charlie Dempsey.

Obviously all those Dempsey quotes from 1996-99 in which he panned the whole Kingz concept were made up by irresponsible journalists, because here Charlie comes out and hails the Kingz as *"an example of the development of the game under the Oceania Football Confederation umbrella"* which *"should see the game prosper in the region."* Glad we set the record straight on that one, Charlie.

Match reports are reprinted from every Kingz game last season, home and

away, complete with team lineups. I don't think these largely run-of-play match reports have aged well. They didn't hold my interest at all, though if you ever want to confirm Menillo had a red and yellow card again Melbourne Knights at Albany on December 17, 1999, this is the mag for you.

Stack & Stan explain early on that they purposefully haven't delved into the remarkable first-year off-field happenings at the Kingz, not having the time resources or knowledge to tackle that side of the story.

Fair enough, but it would have been handy nonetheless to have had some form of annotated timeline recording the various growing pains of the club from founding deeds to missed wage payments to Fifa approval. It's only when you add such factors to the mix that you are able to put into true perspective the achievements of the Kingz in Year 1.

The review could also have used a good proof read. In parts, apostrophes and quotation marks look like they have come off a Martian keyboard. But in a perverse sort of way this only serves to remind us this is a fan publication, not an oily PR job.

Besides, these are minor quibbles. The important thing is that Stack & Stan have shown what is possible in reviving soccer publishing. On a tiny budget they've produced a collector's item.

I'm already looking forward to next season's review, with an even greater cross-section of fan comment, so it would be nice if all you readers buy at least one copy.

As Wombat says on P11: *"Kingz fans demand nothing but expect everything"*.

Stand Up If You Love The Kingz is available from SoccerMag Publishing, PO Box 10-284, Te Rapa, Hamilton. \$15 inc P&P. Or contact: ronaldo@world-net.co.nz

**The Away Game, by Matthew Hall (HarperCollins, 2000, \$27.45).
Reviewed by Tony Sasso.**

The Away Game documents the growing phenomenon of Australian footballers playing in Europe, and around the world. At first glance, I wondered why I would be interested in reading 300+ pages about Ozzies playing successfully (or otherwise) everywhere from the Premier League, Serie A and the Bundesliga to Japan's J-League.

However this book is written in a style that reflects the subject matter. In a 'blokesy', 'matey' narrative that is easy to read, Hall through a number of case studies, outlines a number of Australian players and their careers and the problems they faced from both home and abroad. As outlined on the back cover "The flight of Australian football talent to the greener fields of Europe is perhaps *the* story of Australian soccer. Players in our academies and leagues are routinely plundered by big, cashed-up European clubs that can offer fame, glory, world-class competition and astronomical pay packets. What they leave behind is a sport racked by internal power struggles and locked in a perpetual battle to attract fans, sponsorships and television overage".

That last sentence really got me interested. New Zealand too is starting to get players into the big time, we now have the Kingz in the NSL, and the committed soccer fan has to deal with the same shit in the boardroom and in the media as our cousins over the ditch.

We cannot begrudge our favourite local players striving for the big overseas contract. It is undoubtedly the dream of

every young soccer fan/player to play in the big time, but for those select few who make it what are the sacrifices? Well for one, availability for international representation seems to be extremely problematic. With Australia and New Zealand being on the other side of the planet issues of time and distance negatively impact on a player's desire to represent their country, and on that country's ability to name the strongest possible squad. The annoying thing is that

I can see both sides to the argument. Why would Leeds want to release a key player like Harry Kewell to fly around the world, possibly get injured or at the very least be completely bugged upon return, when it is the club that pays the astronomical salaries of these stars? Yet why shouldn't a country (a 'developing' football nation at that) have unfettered access to the brightest talent to assemble the best

possible team to compete on the international stage?

Kewell, Okon, Bosnich, Schwarzer, Aloisi, Slater, Lazaridis, Viduka, Vidmar - the list goes on and you have to grudgingly admit there is real talent over there. This book provides some of the answers as to why Australia still ranks so low in international rankings. Chapter after chapter Hall informally chats with various players who in turn seem to open up and provide interesting insights. Perhaps in some cases it's the joy of talking to a fellow countryman in a far-off land. My betting is that it is Hall's manner. It is evident that Matthew Hall REALLY loves football.



Reading the book made me extremely envious of him. In his travels researching this book and other football journalism, he has seen some fantastic games and been all over the world (it would be interesting to know if this was all on the 'doughnut'). His account of the 1999 Roma-Lazio derby - Paul Okon played for Lazio - is a real eye-opener; after scoring, Roma's Francesco Totti lifting his shirt to reveal a message telling the Lazio fans "I Have Fucked You Again" would have to be seen to be believed!

The soccer as sport/love vs. business dichotomy is a bind that continually resurfaces in *The Away Game*. As is the murky goings-on in the upper echelons of soccer management. I guess where billions are at stake the wielding of enormous power is almost an aphrodisiac. And we don't have too far to look at the shit that can go down (eh, Mr. Dempsey?). Personalities seem to have a big stake in this business and if they clash, someone is going to get hurt. A Player's career or a country's soccer ambitions can be irrevocably damaged with a few ill-judged

words or through a personal power struggle or feud.

Only chapter 24 ('At Midnight It Was Time To Go Home') doesn't really fit within the broad general theme of this book. It is an account of the scandals, power struggles, trials and tribulations of the (mis-)management of Australian soccer. It is fascinating and depressing and is in fact a topic for a book in itself.

And while I'm trying to look for another down side, and to be fair it is unavoidable, this book can be factually out of date very quickly in the modern world of soccer transfers. But importantly the underlying issues remain the same and this is why it is an informative read that will appeal to the New Zealand soccer fan. We both may have only been to one World Cup, but only one of us managed to find the back of the net while there. However the heartbreak and manner of Australia's failure to qualify for the France '98 is beyond trans-Tasman rivalry and joking.

Definitely worth a read, cobber.

Tony Sasso is chief librarian at Waikeria Prison and a Bloc 5 regular.

Dunedin Tech Season Review 2000 (video) . Reviewed by Ron Griffiths

As local soccer rivalry dictates, Christchurch soccer people do not have much time for Dunedin soccer sides...in a 'good to see you, nice to see you, get back on the bus again' sort of way, so I wondered how much interest this video would hold for me. In the event, it is a joy to watch.

On the face of it, filming a National Club Championship side, home and away, like this seems ambitious and given the level of interest, a tad eccentric, but the viewing is very much worthwhile.

Featured here are goals that would grace the English Premiership, scuffed at

shots that your grandfather could have put away, miraculous saves and goals that your granny could have kept out, beautiful passing, and schoolboy blunders...it's all here. Simon Milton's production is excellent, replay of action, different camera angles, good clear statistics...a great effort.

There is a message in all of this. In our rush to support the Kingz and all that it entails, are we in danger of turning our backs on local soccer altogether? As is apparent from watching this video, there is enough soccer action at this level to match anything you would see in a NSL

match. Already Nelson Suburbs will not be competing next year in our National league and this should sound alarm bells for everyone. If more local clubs fold, then where will future Kingz hopefuls come from?

If only from abroad, then New Zealand

soccer player development will be so much poorer, or even die. So when the Kingz kick their last ball of the NSL campaign, let us, as soccer fans, get behind the National Club Soccer League. If you have forgotten how good it can be, then buy this video!



Behind the scenes at Kingz training, Part 2...

Frank Simons



Talking bollocks

The nonsense that gets written about soccer

*"In a year that saw the re-launch of a national league and **the Chatham Cup land a title sponsor for the first time**, one club managed to secure New Zealand football's coveted double."*

— **The Wave** (Oceania Confederation magazine), P8 December 2000. They're obviously not counting the Gillette Chatham Cup, the Lion Brown Chatham Cup or the Le Coq Sportif Chatham Cup then.

Soccer Football Kings vs Sydney United

WestpacTrust Stadium 19 Jan 2001

— **"Send yourself to Wellington"** advert, Evening Post Jan 7. The Post knew one of these teams employed dodgy spelling, but opted to go with the Aussies on this occasion.

"The Kingz play at the 25,000-capacity North Harbour Stadium, venue of the 1999 Under-17 World Youth Cup final between Australia and Brazil..."

— **In Blue And White**, South Melbourne's match magazine, January. So don't be surprised if South Melbourne are late arriving to Ericsson on April 25.

"The Kingz most experienced players include... defender Che Bunce, who won a second division championship and youth championship medals with Werder Bremen."

— Really? Shit, Che kept that quiet. And all that time we thought he was in Iceland or Napier. Another fine effort from In Blue and White, January.

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In off the post

Moon shine

Dear Bruce,

Sitter! 46 was, as ever, an excellent read and well worth the wait. I hope your comments on page 6 don't indicate you are considering stepping down as editor, as you would be almost impossible to replace.

Your review of New Zealand Soccer's congress had me shaking my head in wonderment. How can an organisation have any credibility when two of its board members could not muster even a single vote between them and why were there only two candidates for the two vacancies? Is the position of board member that unattractive?

I'm glad I'm not alone in sitting on the fence on the Caversham v. Tauranga issue. My head suggests Tauranga were the logical preference but my heart argues Caversham should have been given the opportunity to "give it a go", even though knowing deep down the latter would inevitably end in tears (particularly for Cavvy's financial backers).

Unfortunately, I'm not privy to the workings of the Oceania Football Confederation, but if its intention is to have the Oceania Champions' Cup culminate in a final between the two strongest teams present in PNG it will probably succeed. The representatives of Fiji and the Solomons will be weaker than they were in 2000, because both are club sides this time, rather than representative selections. The groups, then, will not be as imbalanced as they first appear.

I see I have been taken to task for "dredging up" Ken Dugdale's history. In my defence, I would like to point out that 99 per cent of World Soccer's readership reside outside of New Zealand and most of them, being unaware of Dugdale's background, will be intrigued by Ken's unique circumstances. The fact a player banned sine die for headbutting a referee should end up as a national team coach is just as newsworthy to non Kiwi soccer fans, I would suggest, as the news the world's most powerful man engaged in oral sex with an intern would be to a Martian. And, just like Bill Clinton, he will always be remembered for one act of indiscretion. All the more praiseworthy, then, that he has achieved what he has, despite such a handicap.

Another of your Auckland correspondents (strange how all seem to hail from Auckland) has again trotted out the cliché "Charlie Dempsey has done a lot for soccer". H Brother (and others in the Dempsey fan club) may well be right, but isn't

it time someone actually sat down and listed what Charlie has achieved in his forty odd years in the game to prove themselves correct?

To be fair, I can think of several positive aspects of Charlie's cv. He outsmarted Sir Arthur George to provide New Zealand with a favourable World Cup qualifying draw itinerary in 1981, he persuaded FIFA not to impose a ruinous penalty upon the Kiwis after the infamous Indonesian referee was attacked at Mount Smart during the same year and he harnessed Joao Havelange's desire to channel funds to the development of third world soccer to ensure the small Pacific island nations gained their fair share (and possibly more) of that FIFA cash. But is that sufficient to ensure the reverence Charlie obviously enjoys in some circles, particularly as he was also responsible for some horrendous blunders? A clinical and impartial analysis of the Dempsey years is already overdue.

Paul Moon, Oamaru (abridged).

Moon is New Zealand correspondent for World Soccer. — Ed.

Where the hell are the Aucklanders?

Dear Bruce,

I read with interest the article in the last issue by Ken Sargent, "*Rugby - New Zealand's National Sport?*". It confirmed long-held suspicions that disproportionate media coverage of soccer in NZ was conspiratorially hiding the fact that more people play soccer. However, this letter is not about the debate as to why soccer lacks professional, coherent senior administration and organisation (in comparison to the rugby).

The article provided figures comparing Auckland players in the different codes (Rugby League 3770, Rugby 7100 and SOCCER 11500); I just want to ask where the hell are all these Auckland soccer fans every second Friday night at Ericsson? Considering the efforts of out-of-towners in supporting the Kingz, surely even if half the above number of registered soccer players turned up with family/friends crowds would be fantastic.

Fidel Guevara, Havana (sorry, Hamilton).

Guevara is one of the more revolutionary memebbers of Bloc 5. — Ed.

Thanks

Dear Bruce,

Just a quick message of thanks for the donation towards the Oceania Club Championship. I'm sure the lads will be most grateful, and will no doubt enjoy a pint or two upon the conclusion of the tournament.

As you may be aware, we've already encountered a number of problems with Oceania and their organisation of the event and your description of their administration seems more than accurate. PNG was only "confirmed" as the host on Monday (27th Nov) - but is still to under go a final inspection on Dec 15th to ensure the grounds will be up to "international standard". We still do not have flight details, or

accommodation details but hope to have these in the next few days. Obviously this has been extremely frustrating for the club, considering we are fast running out of time in regards to having the necessary vaccinations and immunisations administered to the travelling party, not to mention travel, medical and legal insurance organised. However the squad has now been training for a month and are looking forward to what is sure to be an "experience".

Bruce, thanks once again for the donation and if we are fortunate enough to make it through to Spain I'm sure we'll be sending some form of alcoholic supplements your way!!!!

Robbie Parker, Commercial Manager, Napier City Rovers (abridged).

Sitter! donated \$200 to the Napier beer fund before the tournament. In an accompanying letter I questioned the competence of Oceania organisers to run such a tournament. — Ed.

Oceania Football Confederation Under 20 World Cup Qualifying Playoff

New Zealand v Australia (probably)

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