

# Woollahra Colleagues Rugby Union Football Club



2024 Annual Report



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**THE WOOLLAHRA COLLEAGUES  
RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB**

(Established 1933)

Headquarters Woollahra No 2  
PO Box 197, Double Bay, 2028

**Office Bearers 2024**

PATRON: Her Worship the Mayor of Woollahra

PRESIDENT: Chris Price

VICE PRESIDENTS:

John Anderson, Tim Booth, Michael Caspers, Tim Cullen, David Gooch, Ron Harriden, John Hitchen, Cameron Ireland, Doug Kirkwood, Richard McGrath, John Noice, Sandy Ross, Brian Wood.

CLUB CAPTAIN: Oliver Cowley

SECRETARY: Toby Cooke

TREASURER: Jason Monteath

COMMITTEE:

Nick Donlon, Harry Aboud, Hugo Mactier, Sam Bush, Jock Windsor, Will Lembke, Max Wadell, Andrew Pahoff, Hugo Allen.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:

John Barraclough\* (1963), John Herman (1963), David Higgins (1963), Ken Mclean\* (1963) Harry Barraclough\* (1964), Aubrey Ball\* (1968), Charles Messenger\* (1968), John Corlis\* (1968) Clarrie Noice\* (1968), George Osborne\* (1971), Eddie Radford\* (1971), Cyril Diggle\* (1975) Charles Vandervord\* (1975), Ron Harriden (1977), Fred Storch\* (1978), Geoff Hughes (1979) John Noice (1981), Robert Caldwell (1982), Geoff Robbins (1982), Bruce Diggle\* (1986) Iain Edwards (1986), John Hitchen (1988), Sandy Ross (1988), Doug Kirkwood (1988) John Anderson (1989), Alan Murchison\* (1989), David Gooch (1995), Hans Lamens\* (1998) Michael Clifford (1998), Tim Booth (1998), Brian Wood (2002), Richard McGrath (2005) David Crawford (2007), Justin Crawford (2007), Jerome Murphy (2008), Harvey Welman (2009) Bruce Donald (2009), Vance Lowry (2013), Laurence Campbell (2014), Tim Cullen (2014) Andrew Purchas (2014), John Ryan (2014), Cameron Ireland (2016), Peter Minucos (2019), Ben Waters (2019), Michael Boyd (2022), Dan Kelly (2022), Rob Rush (2022), Ben Wood (2022), Nick Donlon (2023).

HONORARY AUDITOR: Michael Clifford



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## Trophy Winners 2024

### Team Captains

Halligan Cup	Angus Taylor
Sutherland Cup	Henry McInnes
Judd Cup	Nick Keighley
Whiddon Cup	Ollie Cowley
Barbour Cup	Sam Bragg
Burke Cup	Richard Harvey
Kentwell Cup	Sam Bush

### Team Coaches

Halligan Cup	James Taylor & Sam Taylor
Sutherland Cup	Henry McInnes & Rob Hotchin
Judd Cup	Nick Keighley & Will Harris
Whiddon Cup	Andrew McKillop
Barbour Cup	Pete Minucos, Ben Wood & Jack Williams (Colts)
Burke Cup	Sam Deans, Charles Macdonald, James Robins & Will Yeo
Kentwell Cup	Ben Waters, Carl O'Sullivan, Nick Fletcher & Ash Riley

### Best & Fairest

Halligan Cup	Sean O'Brien
Sutherland Cup	Bulla De Villers
Judd Cup	Kevin Prendergast
Whiddon Cup	Simma Underhill
Barbour Cup	Felix Connors
Burke Cup	Hugo Mactier
Kentwell Cup	Aiden Moore

### Club Awards

Colleagues Honour Cap	Toby Cooke & Jack Williams
The David Gooch Award	James Kilby
Club Players' Player	Nick Keighley & Jonathan Condon
Kentwell Cup Players' Player	Will Smith
Rookie of the Year	William Smith
Most Improved Player	David Tejcek
Leading Try Scorer	Ricky Webb
Leading Point Scorer	Connor Size
Oldest and Boldest	Evan Culhane

### 100 games

Henry McInnes  
Evan Culhane  
Ollie Cowley  
Will Lembke  
Jock Windsor



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## President's Report 2024

I am very pleased to present the Woollahra Colleagues Annual Report for 2024 in what was another great year for the club.

Congratulations to all players, coaches, supporters and sponsors for your combined efforts and contribution in ensuring the continued success of the Blue Giants, adding three new trophies to the cabinet this year (Burke, Sutherland and Halligan Cups).

I have really enjoyed my first year as President, particularly working closely with Toby Cooke, Ollie Cowley, Jason Monteath and all the dedicated committee members. These magnificent men make our club what it is and ensure ongoing success year in year out off the field.

Financially, the club is in a reasonably strong position thanks to our sponsors, various grants and our diligent Treasurer. We are progressing discussions with council around a significant development of the club house to ensure we can improve the experience of our growing club with strong numbers across the men's grades, a women's team coming in 2025 and a Convicts contingent with strong numbers.

A huge thank you to our financial supporters Royal Oak Hotel, Bellevue Hotel, Brook Douglas, Fortius-Growth-Point Properties Australia, Ricketson Insurance, McGrath Property Surry Hills, Verandah Bar, Gordon brothers, Hart Rural, Jan Logan Jewellery, Roberts Trading, Sydney Commercial Interiors, Ryans Bar, Woodstock Resources, MJ Bale, Refinancial and OnDeck. We look forward to partnering with you again next season! Thank you for your ongoing support.

Our annual Long Lunch held at the start of the season was success, with Joe Schmidt capturing everyone's attention as we got to listen to his thoughts and plans with the Wallabies as we look to pick ourselves up off the canvas. It was refreshing to hear his humble and honest views, particularly given his predecessor. As always, these events are crucial in providing much needed income for the Club to enable us to continue meeting our financial obligations as well as put a little away for larger development projects in the future.

To all the coaches for 2024, thank you for your efforts. It is big commitment to coach for this Club and the massive amount of effort put in over the long season does not go unnoticed. Your commitment to the success of your respective teams and the passion you show for the Club is awesome. Benny, Carlos, Fletch and Ash in Kentwell. Deansy, Charles, Yeoy, James etc in Burke, Macca in Whiddon, Moral, Keils and Kev in Judd, the Taylors, Henry and Rob in Sutho's/Halligans, Woodsy, Minu and LJ in Colties – thank you for your work! A special call out to Carlos for your huge effort running the full preseason. One area we are working hard on this offseason is to better resource all of the teams to improve communication between grades to build on the strong foundation that was set in 2024.

Kentwell took a while to get going in 2024 but ended with real promise. It was another year of transition as we unearthed some great new faces and welcomed back some old ones. There were a lot of challenges with availability, weather etc that made things challenging for the whole club this year, it would have been easy for this senior squad to throw the towel in but week in week out the guys showed a lot of resilience, whilst there were not as many wins as we would have liked the intent and growth throughout the group of men that played Kentwell can only lead to success as we look toward a promising 2025.

Huge congratulations to the Burke men going back to back. It's hard winning one but to do it again is seriously impressive. It wasn't as easy as 2023, but the squad came together at the right time of year to get the job done. The exciting thing about this squad is the youth coming through, we hope to see a lot of them back next year for a three-peat. Congratulations to all involved in the 2024 Burke Cup Premiership.



Whiddon were very unlucky to miss out on the Grand Final, drawing with eventual premiers Waverley in the Prelim. A huge thank you to Macca for running the show this year (help is coming in 2025), with the help of Club/Whiddon Captain Ollie Cowley. A really good group of men contributed to the strong year, we hope the hunger is there to finish the job next year.

Oh so close for the Judd Cup boys this year, this team dominated all year (on and off the field) however were unlucky to miss out, falling short in the big dance. Watching this team come together this year, welding together an established group of Juddies with a few new faces (and some Rugbah League talent) was a great example of what our Club is about.

What a year for the Sutherland/Halligan Cup team this year take out both Cups. The culture across these teams is second to none with really strong leadership and arguably the best-off field form ever. Well done all the coaches and the huge squad on your success this year it truly has been awesome to see you guys do what you do.

Congrats to the colites for another strong year. Our colts are a huge part of why we are so strong across the grades and this year is no different with our very own Felix Connors Captaining the NSW Subbies side to Victory against NSW Country. We have really strong numbers in colts and a continued pathway up into the grades, I hope to see this success continue. Thanks to Minu, Woodsie and LJ for all your work here!

Finally – 2024 will forever be the year we witnessed our first Colleagues Women's team take the field on Ladies days. What an epic day – thanks to Cooney, Scrappy, Fitz and all the girls for getting it together. Can't wait to see how we go in the Joy Johnson Cup in 2025.

To our committee and my fellow executives, thank you again for your support this year. Cooney, Cowley and Monty worked tirelessly throughout the year to make sure our Club succeeds on and off the field. It was great working with you guys and thanks for all your help while I got the hang of things.

See you all in 2025, up the Blue Giants!

Pricey  
President





## Sponsors 2024





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## Club Captain Report 2024

Another year down, brings another successful year for the Blue Giants!

An impressive six out of eight grades and colts teams illustrated their incredible prowess by getting through to the final's series. This feat showcased the determination, dedication, skill and teamwork displayed throughout the whole season. This was undoubtedly a credit to not only the players and coaches, but also to all the support staff and committee members to ensure we get the best results. A comprehensive display of commitment speaks volumes about the 'culture' of the Blue Giants' program, instilling pride in the rugby community and reinforcing the organisation's standing as a powerhouse in the realm of competitive sports.

Moreover, I like to make a special mention to Halligan, Judd & Burke Cup squads who all successfully reached the grand final. A further praise must be made to the Halligan team, who defeated an undefeated Waverley side to be crowned champions. And of course, the mighty Burke Cup team, who were able to secure back-to-back premierships. Winning a grand final is a great testament, however being able to go back there the next year and to do the same, demonstrates the dedication and resilience of the team and coaching staff.

As another year passes and we look back on what a great year it was, it is undoubtedly evident that the members of the 2024 playing and coaching cohort have set the bar high and inspired future generations within the club to continue to drive the success and legacy.

The year of 2024 also displayed some great achievements off the field. We witnessed notable developments including the introduction of many new sponsorships. Sponsors are the life blood of the club and we feel privileged to have continuous support through new sponsors coming on board at Colleagues.

A notable new addition this year was the unveiling of the Womens Rugby Team down at Woollahra Colleagues. The women's team had one curtain raiser game this year which was played on our ladies day in front of a packed crowd. The support shown across the whole club was amazing! This has been a great initiative and something we as a club have been working towards over the last few years. It has been excellent to see the significant growth in the women's game and to add this to the Woollahra Colleagues community has undoubtedly seen us become a complete rugby club. Notable mentions to Toby Cooke, Fitz Bowman and Nick Donlon for taking their time and effort in getting this great program up and running.

I want to express my appreciation to the entire playing group, coaching staff, and support staff for their incredible contributions across the 2024 season. Serving as the Club Captain of such a prestigious club has been a privilege, and its thanks to the collective efforts of the team that we have had such a successful year.

I also want to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you to Scrappy and Hoppa. The work that you do behind the scenes doesn't go unnoticed and ensuring the bar is always stocked and having someone to serve beer is one of the most thankless jobs.

Lastly, a massive thank you to my fellow executive committee members, Pricey, Toby and Monty who work tirelessly every week. To see so much talent, commitment and enthusiasm throughout the whole club is a testament to the hard work you all do throughout the season to ensure we make this a great and enjoyable club to be a part of.

Here's to continuing to grow the game they play in heaven!

Yours in being a Blue Giant  
Cowley



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## Treasurer's Report 2024

The Blue Giants had a solid year on the field winning three premierships. My highlight though was the launch of a women's side who will enter the subbies competition next year. Well done to all the Magnificent Men and Women who donned the Blue Jersey in 2024. 2025 is positioning itself to be another great year for the Club.

This year we hosted three special events in the form of the Long Lunch and two Ladies Day. Subs were very strong and ever so slightly up on last year. Sponsorships were solid, and we continued to be supported by grants allowing some upgrades to the canteen, which included the retirement of the clubs long serving ice tub and upgrade to an actual fridge in the canteen. Support at all home games was strong on the sidelines and in the clubhouse and our new BBQ team kept everyone well fed. All of these income streams and controlled spending meant we improved the cash position of the Club year on year and delivered an operating profit even after depreciation charges.

The Calligeros Group's Bellevue Hotel, in conjunction with the Royal Hotels Group's Royal Oak, again provided the Club with support and we will look to continue with them next year.

This year saw Brook Douglas, sign on as a major sponsor; OnDeck joined as sponsor of the women's team; Kemosabe Capital returned as sponsor; and we welcomed new sponsors in Ricketson Insurance, RE financial returned and became a sponsor respectively. 2024 saw the continuation of sponsorship from Fortius-Growth Point, Veranda Bar SVP Partners, Mark Foy through McGrath Property, John Ryan through Ryan's Bar, Gordon Brothers, MJ Bale, SCI, Roberts trading and Jan Logan.

The support from sponsors throughout 2024 who have stuck with us through the cost-of-living pressures and uncertain economic times is greatly appreciated by the Club. Sponsors play a significant role in supporting the Club allowing us to be able to continue to support the day-to-day operations without eroding our cash reserves.

In terms of our social events, as mentioned, we hosted two Ladies Day's and the Long Lunch. The Long Lunch featured a visit from Wallabies coach Joe Schmidt as well as the auction, Jersey Calcutta and another batch of heritage jerseys around the Club. Both Ladies Days were well run and sold well allowing for a strong showing on and off the field. The second ladies day was highlighted by the debut of a women's team in the sky blue jersey, they got the W which is very promising for 2025. These events were strongly attended and supported and contributed positively to the Club's cash reserves.

As is stated each year, the cost of running such a large Club will continue to escalate with rising insurance, registration and council costs. It is great we can continue to grow our reserves.

To Club President, Club Secretary and Club Captain, Chris Price, Toby Cooke and Oliver Cowley, thanks for a great year. It was great to have Pricey and Ollie step up into a formal leadership role this year. The passion shown by these guys for the Club is second to none. Toby's receiving an honour cap is a fitting way for him to conclude his time as Club secretary– Well done mate! To run a Club of our size so smoothly needs great dedication and we've been fortunate to be led by these guys and supported by the committee and coaches in 2024.

I would also like to thank Nick Donlon for tirelessly running everything gameday-related. Clubs the size of ours would cease to function without the generous input of unsung heroes like him, aptly supported by the committee and Club's volunteers – cheers to all of you magnificent men.

Lastly, I am confident that the Club has the capacity to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Jason Monteath  
Honorary Treasurer



## Club Secretary Report 2024

This year we saw the first Colleagues Women's 10s team play an exhibition match, the return of the two ladies days, the launch of a Colleagues members pack, onboarded some great new sponsors and hosted a successful Long Lunch featuring Joe Schmidt. It was fitting that 2024 was the Chinese year of the Dragon and didn't it start with absolute fire. Before some players had put their footy boots away or even collected them from the club, subbies held a meeting to sadly relegate St Pats and Petersham, but in the process, we welcomed Lindfield to Div 1. From there we were back to 7 teams and a home and away style season.

With the draw set, all we needed was the weather to play ball. Which it didn't. We experienced one of the most challenging years in a while, where 6am pitch inspections were a regular occurrence. With three wet weather rounds all either used up or washed out, Suburban Rugby made the call to play two rounds for double points. Predictably, this went down like a lead balloon but the Giants soldiered on.

As the whistle went to start 2024, Colleagues had entered six men's grade teams and two colts teams, one of the strongest years for player numbers in the clubs history, which was a nod to the success in 2023 where we took out the club championship. Our second colts team played in the Div 2 colts comp for Hills, who were unable to field a team. This worked well until the mid-year pilgrimage to Europe gutted our colts ranks.

Off the field, we launched a member's pack that sold like hot cakes to local, regional and interstate old boys. We welcomed a new club captain Ollie Cowley and new club President, Chris Price who contributed heavily to the successful season in 2024. Pricey got stuck in to all most everything from, playing, mopping and even opposition presidents. Ollie brought back the two annual ladies days, with the second being bolstered by a Women's 10s exhibition match played between Colleagues and Hunters Hill. The day was a fantastic success with sidelines full and an amazing group of women taking to the field as proud Colleagues. Next year we are entering a team in the Joy Johnson Cup for the first year and can't wait to see what this lot do on and off the field for our club.

As the regular season came to a close the hotly contested Halligan Cup was shaping up for a fantastic finish with Waverley and Colleagues close at the top of the ladder. It came down to the final round game where we were able to edge Convicts out to secure the premiership. I cannot applaud this bunch of players enough, they organise and run their own show, sometimes playing games away from the rest of the club at ungodly hours with occasionally no physio (or ref), congratulations on a great season.

As we rolled into finals, most of our grades were in contention for the cup which makes the whole year worth it from a committee point of view. Our Judd, Whiddon and Barbour all sadly bowed out in the major semifinals; however Sutherland and Burke booked a date in the grand final. Sutherland were shafted to a Friday night final at a dark Daceyville but pulled together one of the all-time great performances as the severe underdogs to rattle Waverley and take out our first silverware for the year. Our Burke were looking to go back to back and fought hard with Hunters Hill but were able to convert pressure into points and came away with another tight win.

I have had an extremely rewarding last two years as the Secretary, no where else can you get the sense of achievement than on the committee of this club. There are great people at every turn, willing to support your ideas no matter how wild. I'll continue to be apart of this great club and look forward to what's in store in 2025.

Cheers,

Toby

Secretary





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## Club Coach Report 2024

The 2024 was a very strong season for the mighty Blue Giants which again culminated with all teams bar Kentwell through to the finals and 3 hard fought premierships with Halligans, Sutherland and Burke Cup all getting the job done.

The club continues to develop its style of play with a big focus on defence and keeping the ball in play with a high tempo to try and test out the conditioning of other teams. The other big focus was adapting to what is in front of you and this has been progressing well based on a number of key situational drills implemented by Carl O'Sullivan. It is great to see players start to identify and execute on opportunities that have been practised during training.

The season started well with a trip to Drummoyne and the rounded out nicely with a convincing blue rinse against Div 1 newcomers, Lindfield. As mentioned, to get 6 out of 7 teams into the finals, 4 into grand finals and win 3 of those finals is an exceptional year and is representative of the hard work, dedication and application of all players, coaches and the administration

### ***Kentwell Cup***

It was a tough season for the Kentwell boys with a number of senior players moving on from the 2023 season and a host of new players earning the honour of pulling on the Kentwell jumper. It took quite a while to settle into our patterns and rhythm and the results showed that. What was clear was that when the boys got it together and stuck to the plan, they were competitive and proved they could stay with the competition front runners but too often got themselves into a good lead only to let it slip away through poor game control. Having said that it was very exciting to see a number of new players make their mark in the top grade and given the relatively young age of the team means the Blue Giants will be in great stead for many years to come. Bushy and the leadership team did a great job of setting the standard required to be a first grader and the building blocks are certainly there for 2025 and beyond. This was clearly evident when Lindfield made the mistake of turning up thinking they would cruise through the last round into the finals only to get belted by the mighty Giant. If anything, this game showed the potential of the team when it stuck to the plan and executed. Much thanks must go to Carl for his tireless efforts in setting training programs, video analysis and helping the boys become a better team. Thank you also to Fletch, Ash and DK for all your assistance. Most importantly thanks to all those who stayed to watch, support of pull on a jumper for Kentwell in 2024. 2025 looks very promising and looking forward to seeing how the boys get it done.

### ***Burke Cup***

It is very hard to win a premiership let alone successfully defend one, but this Burke team has achieved that. The Burke comp seemed a much tighter competition this year and with a high turnover of players through injury, the Burkies had to work bloody hard to get the results and get themselves back into a position to defend their cup. Not always the flashiest team, they work hard for each other and were prepared to grind out tough games and find a way to win when they needed to. To Deansie and his coaching squad, congratulations in getting the boys up to defend their title, a huge result. To the player group, the way you were able to control the game and starve the opposition out of the competition was very impressive. Congratulations to all those that contributed to the Burke Cup grand final from a player perspective, especially those from the Whiddon team who stood by each week to help out when needed. Winning two is unreal and very much looking forward to the Burke Cup remaining in residence in 2025 as the boys go for the three-peat. Well done all.

### ***Barbour/Radford Cup***

Another great year for the colts program with some outstanding new talent getting a taste of Blue Giant rugby and both colts teams doing the club proud and finishing high on the ladder. The number of players that the colts program has at the moment is testament to the culture that they group has built through its player leadership and coaching. Minu and Woodsie again helped the boys understand what it means to be a Blue Giant and the Radford boys welcomed new coach LJ to their ranks.



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As usual boys play an enterprising and expansive style of footy, fast paced and with a willingness to move the ball wide to get and attack from any part of the park. Unfortunately, both teams were again unlucky not to get the silverware this year, especially the Barbour Cup team who came so close to making a third successive GF. A fantastic season for the colts program and we look like we are well stocked with great players and humans coming through the ranks. Congratulations to those who made the Colts rep team and to Felix being named as their captain.

### ***Whiddon Cup***

The Whiddon Cup team had another great year and the team built momentum during the course of the season and came into the finals series hit some great form. To see how this team developed over the back third of the competition was awesome and the way they played their footy was testament to Macca and the senior leadership group. There is no doubt the boys saved their best footy for the business end of the season and it was heartbreaking to see them go out in a draw to Waverly in the prelim. A huge thanks must go to Macca who largely managed this team by himself, and it was great to see the Wombats unearth a number of players who went on to play Burke and Kentwell throughout the season. Congrats on a great year gents and look forward to seeing you all back again in 2025.

### ***Judd Cup***

There is no doubt the Juddies boys brought much talk to the Subbies comp this year with their recruiting ability to bring high profile players down to Blue Giant stadium. How that managed to squeeze A Fafita under the salary cap was unreal (jokes of course) brought a level of interest in Judd Cup not seen for a number of years. The boys were very dominate throughout the year and it was a real ding/dong battle between the Blue Giants and the filth from Waverly with the latter getting up on the day of the GF. The way the boys played their game and the ability to promote the ball was unreal and such a shame not to have got the trophy at the end. Well done the Moral and Keils who did a great job guiding the boys around the park and congrats again to the players for a great season.

### ***Sutherland/Halligan Cups***

This group of legends optimises what it means to be a Blue Giant. Humble, hard working and a great bunch of humans. 2 of our 3 premierships came from this group and it is understandable to anyone who was lucky enough to see them do their thing. For the Halligan men to take out that trophy, despite some skullduggery from our mates up the road in Bondi, was a great start to the finals season, but the win by Suthos over the much fancied (mostly by themselves) Waverly was one of the best games of Blue Giant footy I have seen in a long time. The way this group supported each other through out the year was something to be truly proud of and it was that spirit that meant Waverly were little chance in the GF on a Friday night down at David Phillips Field.

If you have a spare hour and feel like reminding yourself what it means to be a Blue Giant, find yourself a copy of the grand final and strap in the ride. Well done to the coaches for all their hard work and congrats again to the players. A fine season indeed.

In every season down at Blue Giant stadium there are so many people to thank. To the old boys and supporters, you certainly make it worthwhile for the boys each week. Thank you for travelling and being there regardless of the results. To the executive and key administration roles, especially new club President Chris Price, thank you for all the work you do to make sure everything is done so the boys can play their footy. What happens behind the scenes is the most important part of our club and without it there is no footy. Thank you to all the physios and medical team for your hard work in keeping the boys together.

To the coaches, another outstanding year and reflective of you and your passion for the club and your teams. You set the standard and our culture follows. Well done and look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Finally, to the players, it is not always easy being a Blue Giant. Every team wants to knock you off and those clubs who miss the finals look back to a win against the mighty Colleagues as a good year. The club appreciates your hard work and how you represent the club each week. I look forward to



seeing you down at Blue Giant stadium in 2025 and to seeing you all show what it means to be a Blue Giant. Get down there nice and early and see if we can add a few more trophies to the cabinet in 2025.

Thank you for the honour of being your part of this wonderful organisation, best footy club.....period.

Go the Giants

Benny Waters





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## Kentwell Cup Report 2024

The 2024 season looked to continue to rebuild from the premierships in 2022. Seasoned veterans and premierships players Olly Stump, Nic Clancy, Charlie Crawford, Ethan Miller and Jock McGregor departed the club, however this allowed a new leadership group to emerge with Sam Bush taking the armband, ably supported by veterans Evan Culhane, Aidan Brown, Connor Size, Tex Smoutha Ho, Jack Murphy and the Macdonald Brothers (Alex & Hamish). Luke Brown returned from injury and younger players were rapidly becoming more experienced such as Will Smith, Zinzan Still and Oli Andronicus.

Pre-season was embraced by all players with a good turnout as we attempted to embed good habits and a similar game plan that had been so successful over the past few seasons. In a sign of the depth strength of the Blue Giants production line, new additions to the squad were creating excitement including Aidan “mad dog” Moore, Jonah O’Sullivan, Campbell Duff, Digby Cooke, Tom Wickham, Fitz Bowman and Sam Ridley, most of whom had progressed through the colts system into grade. Also, a bloke named Brent Crossley turned up in mid-July for a run. He was closer in age to the coaches than the players, started speaking Afrikaans to the opposition when on the field (I’m not fluent, but it didn’t sound like friendly banter) and was sent off within the first 5 mins of his debut...I think we’ve stuck with him for life 😊.

While we trained well through pre-season, a disrupted trial program due to poor weather led to a season start that was not part of our plans. Our first 5 games were played across 10 weeks as rain cancelled every second game. This also appeared to wreak havoc with our cohesion as the only ray of sunshine during this period was a 28-19 home win against Forest, with the remaining games being defeats to Drummoyne, Blue Mountains, Mosman and Lindfield.

However, with our backs (and forwards) against the wall, we needed to rally in the 2nd half of the season. The boys were training well, combinations were developing, and the group was growing in confidence, we just needed to translate our training into games and play in the right areas of the field. While the first 3 games of round 2 were losses to Blue Mountains, Drummoyne and Hunters Hill, our attack was starting to click. We were challenging the opposition defensive line and scoring some good tries. It was just a matter of time before we could finally show what we are capable of.

During the last 4 games, all our plans fell into place. A 5 try 34-10 win at BGS against Mosman was followed by strong 33-22 away win against a Forest team - featuring a subbies rugby “try of the week” length of the field score from a kick-off receipt. We travelled up Bondi Road to Waverley in a game that featured double competition points due to a wash out in round 1. We narrowly went down 17-22 in a gutsy game we could have won. Determined to end the year on a high, our final home game was a well-deserved win against Lindfield 34-10 where everything we had been training during the year was on show for all to see.

My thanks to Ben Waters, Nick Fletcher, Ash Reilly and Dan Kelly for their support as coaches during the year. Also, thanks to all the coaches at Colleagues who put so much time and effort into this club and their teams. We coach this game at this wonderful club for love not money and while there are inevitable challenges coaching a group of several hundred young men, seeing the players rip in for each other in front of a cheering crowd as the sunsets on Blue Giant stadium certainly makes it worthwhile for me.

Finally, my sincere thanks to all the players who put on a Kentwell jersey in 2024. Not everyone gets to play in the top grade, and you’ve all contributed to the culture and performance of this team. I hope you’ve enjoyed yourself, improved as players and made mates for life, and that’s the true magic of rugby.

See you in January to do it all again in 2025.

Up the Giants!

Carlos



## Burke Cup Report 2024

The 2024 Burke Cup side will forever be known as the team to win back-to-back premierships for the first time in 35 years.

While the 2023 side won 13 games in a row to claim the title, this year's crop were made to work a lot harder for their reward. The side finished the regular season with 9 wins and 5 losses to claim 3rd place.

Across the 3-week finals series, the Burkies had to beat the other three top 4 sides on the way to glory.

After overcoming Forest in round one of the finals, Colleagues came up against a tough Waverley side that had gone through the regular season unbeaten with a 14/14 record. In a memorable and dominant performance, we prevailed 24-15 to send an indignant Waverley packing in straight sets.

This set up a Grand Final date with Hunters Hill, who had qualified 2nd. Despite being clear underdogs, the Burkies entered the arena with an air of confidence as we felt we were once again peaking at the right time of the season.

Only 5 players remained from the victorious 2023 side, including skipper Richard Harvey and vice captain Hugo Mactier, but the side quickly recognised the ingredients required for finals footy – relentless pressure on defence and clinical finishing on attack.

Colleagues ultimately prevailed 18-13 over a strong and well-drilled Hunters Hill side that played the game in good spirits. At the heart of the Burkies' triumph was a delicate blend of seasoned veterans and exuberant youth – with 7 of the starting XV in their first year of Burke Cup.

The team was built on a tough, hardworking forward pack that created opportunities for the electric backline to strike.

The forwards, the bulwark upon which success is often built, were led by the indomitable captain, Richard Harvey. His leadership on and off the field was exemplary, providing a steady hand during critical moments. Every man in the engine room played his part but it would be remiss not to mention number 8 Pat Turnbull who showcased a blend of power and brutality that left opponents in awe, while props Hugo Mactier and Hugh MacRae turned the scrum into an attaching platform. Ed Taylor, the silent assassin and unyielding second rower, demonstrated the athleticism of a fullback as he inspired his teammates with numerous strong carries.

In the backs, halfback Dave Tejcek was outstanding on both sides of the ball and inside centre Ralph Mitchell continued to dominate collisions as he has done since arriving at Colleagues 7 years ago. Arguably the find of the year was winger Lachie Fisher, aka the dark knight, whose footwork and ability to find a gap saw him score one try and set up another in a memorable GF performance.

It's an overused cliché but our success throughout 2024 was genuinely built on the team coming first, rather than individual brilliance. We worked hard for each other with the promise of a few post-match rewards in the sheds sufficient motivation to go the extra mile.

As coaches, that's all you can ask for from a team and this side was a pleasure to work with. They deserved all of their success and we look forward to seeing the young men build on Colleagues' great Burke Cup pedigree as they chase a 3-peat next year.

Thanks must also go to the club's leadership team of Pricey, Monty, Cookey, and Cowley, who once again played a crucial role in the club's success. The club is in a great place and we look forward to many more years of success.

Thanks for a great year.

Cheers,

Burke Cup coaching staff 2024



## Whiddon Cup Report 2024

Another season has come and gone for the mighty Whiddon Wombats, and while it was another rain-interrupted year, our team showed incredible resilience and determination. The early season disruptions led to a series of must-win games worth double points. We embraced this challenge and knew we would have a competitive edge given the team's passion for gambling.

One of the season's highlights was our thrilling comeback victory over Hunters Hill. Trailing late in overtime, we strung together an incredible 20-phase attack, culminating in a bonus-point try that secured a crucial double-point win and propelled us into the top four.

Building on this momentum, we embarked on a winning streak that solidified our place in the finals. The preliminary final against Waverley was an epic battle that regrettably ended in a draw. While we fell short of reaching the grand final, the team should be proud of their efforts and use this as energy to propel them to greatness next year!

In a historic first for 3rd grade there was a game where we had a legitimate reserve prop! In fact, by the end of the seasons the Wombats forward pack had there very own bomb squad. As a result, the team's front rowers: Simma, Pat Connelly, Charlie Clift, Stu Maclennan and Ross Altson have all been signed on 35 year contracts to the Wombats.

I'd like to extend special congratulations to Oliver Cowley and Will Lembke for reaching the significant milestone of 100 games for the club. Their dedication and commitment have been invaluable to the team.

As we look ahead to next season, there's excitement in the air. Beithy has bulked up, gaining 7 kilos while still maintaining his sub-70kg weight class. His increased strength and power promise to make him a formidable force on the field. With the perfect combination of youth coming through the Colts system and experience with the core team being around for a few years, there is a lot to look forward to in 2025!

Cheers  
Macca





## Judd Cup 2023 Report

The 2024 Judd Cup season was a great season, with the Juddmen pushing further than their impressive 2023 campaign, only to fall bravely in the grand final against the reigning champions, Waverley.

This season marked a new era for the Judd Cup, with Will “Morale” Harris and Nick “King” Keighley stepping in as coaches. Together, they assembled a team led by the inspiring captaincy of Kevin “Kev” Prendergast and the committed support of vice-captain Tom “Crutch” Hennessy. A special thanks goes to Harry “DA” Aboud for his tireless efforts as manager, ensuring everything ran seamlessly.

The team was bolstered by the return of many forward veterans of prior Judd Cup campaigns - Brister, Harris, Semania, Sauer, Price, Prendergast, Gosper, H Allen, Peck (to name a few) - whose experience provided a rock-solid set piece and go forward throughout the season. At the same time, the injection of youthful new blood – Alston, Cropley, Bloomer, Waddell, Sones, Lindsay, Mc Carthy, Hanniffy - and some absolute Judd Cup stayers – Windsor, Keighley, Hennessey, Watson, Webb, Kilby, D Allen, Storrer – this Judd Cup team was full of pace, energy and excitement which added to that classic Judd Cup style of play.

One of the standout moments of the season was the electrifying addition of 252-game NRL star Andrew Fifita—known as “Rhys’ mate Andrew.” Playing inside centre, Fifita made an immediate impact both on and off the field. His presence elevated the team and added an unforgettable chapter to the Judd Cup story.

The Juddanaughts closed out the regular season with a stellar record of 8 wins, 3 draws, and 3 losses, finishing 2nd with a point differential of +129. The season was defined by tight victories and heroic defensive efforts, none more legendary than Ricky Webb’s five-try haul at Blue Mountains - foretold in a dream the night before!

Although the grand final against the dominant Waverley side proved to be an uphill battle, the Juddmen can hold their heads high as they were in the fight until the end. We fought fiercely against a team that has been tough to beat for the last 3 years.

To every player who donned the Judd Cup jersey in 2024, thank you for making this season unforgettable both on and off the field. There is unfinished business at Colleagues in the Judd Cup so stay tuned. Big things are coming for the 2025 Judd Cup season.





## Sutherland/Halligan Cup Report 2024

The season of seasons - double Premiers!

After a couple of “wonky” seasons - both from a results and a social perspective, the Halligan and Sutho squad gallantly returned to glory!

Led by the player/coach combination of Henry ‘Minivan’ McInnes and Rob Hotchin, the squad saw the return of the core group of veterans and a good mix of new faces.

60+ different players graced the hallowed Woollahra turf, most of whom came for the beer more than the rugby. But maybe it was those shared moments over a cold amber nectar that galvanised this squad.

It was a season of momentum. Halligans were almost invincible from start to finish (only losing 1 game after being denied a match winning try on full time). This is nothing new to Colleagues - the recent 3x champs have become very accustomed to drinking out of the Halligan trophy.

But the Sutherland cup had alluded the fierce Colleagues men since 2015. Waverley had been the favourites from day dot, with an almost perfect season and 3 convincing victories over the Colleagues men.

However, on a perfect Friday evening Grand Final, the Colleagues men decided that 2nd was not an option.

Chris Schleibs put a light blue shirt on for the final time, he rallied the troops for what was one of the all time great Grand Finals. Not a bad way to hang those tallowed boots.

Strong performances from Leo Christopher, Jarid Kolver, Trent Ryan and Dan McKay set the platform, and lights went out at 20-5 - Colleagues victory and a historic double premiership for the Halligan/Sutherland squad.

The overwhelming sensation was that this is the start of a new era. 40 lads turns up to the post season re-watch event which gave birth to the new sporting platform, Halligans TV. The Halligan ethos of being the #1 social grade is now backed up with trophies from multiple comps.

Well done on a great season. Shoutout to Halligan best and fairest (& new sponsor) Bulla de Villiers, and Sutherland Cup best and fairest Sean O’Brien.

Season 2025 poses the challenge of the double double. The chance, the opportunity to write their names in Colleagues folk law.

Tune into Halligans TV - like and subscribe

<http://www.youtube.com/@HalligansTV>





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## Women's team report 2024

First and foremost, a huge congratulations to all other teams who've had a great season this year.

On behalf of the women's team, I would like to thank everyone who played a part in making the first ever Colleagues women's team a reality.

It's an incredible achievement and one that marks a truly special chapter in the club's history.

It's been an honour and a privilege to be part of this journey and to play for such a welcoming and supportive club. From the moment we stepped onto the field with AC/DC rattling through the speakers it truly felt like we were apart of the Colleagues family.

Although our season was short and sharp, we've walked away with more than just an undefeated season — we've made lifelong mates who share a passion for the odd drink or twenty.

On a more serious note, I'd like to sincerely thank the entire club for getting behind us and making this happen.

Special thanks go to Ollie Cowley, Nick Donlon and Chris Price who were pivotal in bringing everything together.

Another massive thank you to Fitzy Bowman and Toby Cooke, our fearless leaders, whose dedication, management and enthusiasm were unmatched.

We also couldn't have done it without the generous support of our sponsors — your backing made this all possible.

Let's not forget how far we've come. Most of the team didn't even own footy boots at our first training session — and some of us probably still don't! But with the club's incredible support, we managed to get across the line.

Winning on the buzzer during our exhibition match was a moment we'll never forget, and we're so proud to be part of this mighty club.

Here's to building on this success next season — we can't wait to do it all over again.

Cheers,

Alex McLaughlin



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## Barbour Cup Report 2023

The Minucos/Wood Future Blue Giant Factory fired up once again for Season 2024.

Fresh off back to back heartbreaking GF losses in 2022 and 2023, the coaches gathered what was left of their aorta's and began another arduous campaign of trying to keep up with men half their age.

The inclusion of former club captain and bus song specialist LJ to the coaching staff added some much needed youth and vigour... and a handy stand in Half Back at training.

A quality core of returning Colts spearheaded by Braggy, Forey, Mauly, Smithy, Crowie, Archie, Kirky, Ollie (the more common Colts with nicknames ending in "y or ie"), paired with outliers with alternate nicknames Ranson, Nicko and Dougs to place us in good stead and augured well. Well indeed.

Early training sessions showed that the newbies were good. Very good... and we began our campaign with high hopes. Some early season teething problems saw an uneven start, until training finally clicked, and we strung some wins together. A statement victory at home against Forest was the catalyst for the internal belief that we could again challenge.

As always, the middle of the year proved to be a total and utter shitshow with Uni holidays creating a tsunami of difficulties. Plus the RAIN. Washouts, double points rounds, forfeits. This season had it all.

A huge moment came during a washout actually as many of the parents of the boys had travelled from rural NSW to see the boys play, only to find BGS in full puddle mode. What to do? Perhaps a lock in. Team bonding. Family bonding. Parents, players and coaches alike sharing a beer, dancing on tables and becoming BLUE GIANTS.

To me, the strength of our Colts program is often noticed in later years... when 6 or 7 previous Colts run out for Kentwell. And this year, we believe has many young men that can matriculate up and fuel the club for years to come. New additions, Scotty, Craigy, Seb, Gillies, Monie, Sticky, Hazo, Gerry, Mini Wicks, Tyson the Mad Dog, Buzz, Tommy A provided not only a higher variety of nicknames, but also quality play and genuine Blue Giant characteristics. The future looks bright indeed.

Special mention to Felix Connors, our number 8, who was awarded the richly deserved honour of captaining the NSW Subbies Colts Team against NSW Country. Congrats Conny.

Semi Finals rolled around, and we found ourselves in the unfamiliar do-or-die Minor Semi against Drummoyne. We did. And on we went to the GF Qualifier against Hunters Hill.

We led 14-0 after 15 minutes... it looked like our day, but alas some things conspired against us, and a relentless and very good Hunters Hill triumphed on the day. They would then go onto defeat the previously undefeated Mosman in the GF. So a 3rd to follow up from back to back 2nds. Cue the psychologist for Minu and Woodsie.

Congrats to Burkies, Suthos and Halligan for their silverware. Glorious lads.

Pricey, Mont, Ollie and the Committee - flawless as usual.

Minu will be back, Woodsie likely due to British and Irish Lions commitments, not so much... but the DNA will always remain. Building Blue Giants through Beer, Banter and Rolling Mauls.

Woodsie



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## Sydney Convicts Addendum Report 2024

2024 was the 20th Anniversary and also a Bingham Year for the Convicts. Training started early with recruitment the ongoing challenge. We delayed our Pathways programme until half way through the year but once again that was a massive success with a cohort of about 20 who hadn't played rugby before.

Our First XV were back in Div V but with going away in May had to forfeit games which made making it to any finals pretty impossible. We lost the Barbra Streisand Cup against Maccabi having beaten them once in the season. Our Second XV was developing well and got support from Colleagues with plenty of games against them in the course of the season.

Rome and the Bingham Cup were amazing with the Second XV coming away with some silverware. Our First XV made the Bingham Cup Final but lost against the French who were not allowed to engage in contested scrums and so had a distinct advantage in not having played 5 bruising games with fully contested scrums and being able to field what looks like the national 7s squad. A great final and the boys did amazingly well. Brisbane for 2026 so we don't have to travel too far.

Once again there were plenty of sessions where we were practising against Colleagues. The judiciary didn't keep us too busy this year!! Hats off to the Colleagues boys who are getting a bit of experience appearing there.

Community day with the help from Nick and Esther – we played a second memorial match for Simon Dunn and your Halligans team were involved again and Shaggy as referee left an indelible memory – resplendent in Red and wearing vipers. It was an amazing day.

We joined you at the launch of the women's rugby down in Double Bay.

Also thanks for attending our 20 th Anniversary Celebration in October. Without Colleagues we could not exist and in 20 years countless players and others involved have had so much to gain from their involvement. It is a really big thing for us to be in partnership with the Colleagues and look forward to that continuing into 2025.

That is all for our 20th year. We ended it on a high and aim to continue our growth as a club while we look towards the Purchas Cup in 2025 and Bingham Cup in 2026.

Ken Averre

President Sydney Convicts