



KCC Football Section – Chairman’s Report on 2010-11 Season

One of the enduring strengths of the KCC has always been the easy camaraderie between the different sporting sections in the club. In the football section we have numerous members who play other sports for the KCC, including cricket, hockey, squash and (even) lawn bowls – as well as a few people who can play football. We have taken part in a charity squash tournament and organised a lawn bowls evening, and our members are among the strongest supporters of social events at the club.



Solidarity within the section itself is also important - when the KCC Knights reached the semi-final of the Yau Yee Cup, a host of players from the KCC Dragons and the KCC Royals turned up to cheer them on. In the last match of the season, the KCC Dragons were playing for an outside chance of winning the First Division championship, roared on by a healthy turn-out from the ranks of the Knights and the Royals. The Royals meanwhile continue to play to largely empty seats, despite providing inaction-packed entertainment.

On the other side of the generation gap from the Royals, the KCC junior programme is growing like Topsy. We have six age groups from under 9s to U14s playing in the Hong Kong Junior Football League, and numerous smaller kids waiting their turn. There are some 40 girls in a



separate programme that now features regular tournaments. This year we also started an U15s squad, which has quickly grown to 22 players and has challenged HKFA U15s teams such as Kitchee, Happy Valley, Tai Chung, Tai Po and Sham Shui Po in regular friendly matches.

We now have a spanking new kit, in official club colours, which is worn by everyone in the section from the captain of the Dragons right through to the smallest kid on the junior programme. Well, almost everyone – the Royals have presented some challenges on the size front.

It may or may not be down to the new kit, but this season our teams have achieved some of the best results we have seen at the club for more than ten years. As mentioned above, Knights and Dragons came



close in the Cup and League title races. After last season's relegation, Knights decided that one season in the Second Division was enough, and have come straight back up as champions. The U14 team finished third in their HKJFL league, our 1998s and 2000s

starred at the HKFC end of season tournament and the junior girls team brought home the under 12s tournament Cup.

Behind every team there is another team, and Shyam Nainani and Luke Schroder have been the masterminds behind the Dragons push for Yau Yee domination. Jim Down, assisted by coach Hernan Vaca, has been the driving force behind the Knights, even squeezing on a team shirt himself and scoring a crucial goal in the final stages of the Second Division title run-in. Jim, Tony Smith, James Gough, Ravi Sujani, Andy Powner, Ravi Panjabi, Chris Pickles and others have spent most of their Saturday mornings ensuring that our juniors get regular training and matches.



Thanks are also due to the Brazilian Soccer Schools, whose expert coaching has helped our juniors to develop their true potential. Respect also to Ravi Sujanani and Mike Trayford for their social work, with the Royals having a full season of almost trauma-free matches.

Once again, we had an outstanding visit to our great friends at the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, with tour arrangements superbly marshaled by Mike, with assistance from Michael Johnson. James Gough was the man with the plan, organising the tour themes and prizes that kept everyone on a roll. Mally Leigh was stonily incorruptible (for a price) as tour judge, and tour newcomer Dave Christmas provided a musical soundtrack that took us on a roller-coaster journey all



the way from the late 50s to the early 60s. We narrowly failed to recover the Laura Trayford Cup, going down 6-5 in an epic encounter with RBSC, but in a generous gesture, Bangkok suggested that the true home of the cup was the KCC, and allowed us to bring it back home, even though it (temporarily) has their name on it.

As in previous years, we entered a team in the HKFC International Soccer 7s (Masters Group), and were lucky enough to have both the eventual finalists in our qualifying group. Somehow we equaled our best ever result by getting through to the last eight of the Cup



competition, where we were narrowly defeated (1-0) by a team featuring several ex-Hong Kong internationals. Mike did a great job of getting the team together, with help from Hernan and Shyam, and once again the KCC support was the best in breed.

Several members of the Football Committee have decided that it is time to take a break and give some-one else a bash at running the section. I would like to acknowledge here the contributions of outgoing Royals Manager Ravi Sujanani, Events Manager Mike Trayford, Secretary James Gough and especially my mentor Jim Down, who over the past 45 years has done just about every job on the committee, most recently Head of Junior Football and Knights Manager. I would also like to thank those who are staying on: Shyam as Dragons Manager - looking to have another crack at that elusive First Division title - and Tony for being the best Treasurer in the club.

I look forward to welcoming the newly-elected committee members on board. This is an opportunity to take the section in new directions, and although my new colleagues will have some large Astroturf boots to fill, these promise to be exciting times, with the possibility of further expansion of our senior and junior teams as Hong Kong football itself enters a new phase. Watch this space.

Finally, I would like to record my appreciation for the many players, parents and other supporters who have contributed to making KCC simply the best football club in Hong Kong, as well as to General Manager Robert Blythe, Kings Chan and all the other staff members who have given us so much support over the past year. It's been real.



Jon McKinley
Captain of Football 2010-11 Season