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Welcome all to the Maccabi Hakoah Feds Newsletter. My name is Mark, and I will be the chief editor of this newsletter.

Let me start with my brief. My job is to make sure that every person in the community, state, country, known universe etc know about what the Hakoah football teams are doing, how they are progressing, what they are achieving and where they need improvement. This won't be a glorified propaganda piece, this is about the facts.

These editions will have exclusive interviews with the people running the club, the coaches, the players, disgruntled parents, exhausted team managers, and everyone in between.

But there has to be restrictions. For example, I can't publicly berate Everton's continuously poor performances as Barry Walker may be offended. I won't make comparisons between the Feds Committee and the faceless men of the Labor Party. That would just be wrong (considering they are paying my wages!)

But in all seriousness, I am more than aware of the past history of Hakoah, and the Feds Committees goal to ensuring that this club is restored to its rightful place in the NSW football hierarchy. I am also aware that despite the successes of this club in its last year, with the Under 15s winning the minor premiership and making the grand final, that this was barely mentioned in the Australian Jewish News for reasons that I, and many others, cannot fathom.

In essence, that is where this Newsletter comes from. You won't see many stories on the Hakoah Feds teams in the AJN. You will see them here. This is your newsletter. Your chance to express delight at the successes of this club, grievances over a loss on the weekend, or just an opinion on the hairstyle of Barry Walker.

I encourage everyone, young or old, to write in to tell me your thoughts. This way I can cater this newsletter to everyone.

**Please note: if you have any family members, friends, relatives or interested persons who wish to receive this newsletter, please press "reply" and send us their email addresses.**

I can't wait to get the season started, and to see the Opens earn promotion and the youth teams to take home some more silverware.

So until then, let your passes find the man, your shots find the goal, and your skills find the girls.

Mark

## **Opens Kick Arouns**

After a season of disappointment last year, the Hakoah Opens have started early this year, with new coach Mark Robertson organizing weekly kick-arounds at the beginning of the month.

With the entire Feds coaching staff in attendance, including the youth coaches, the general consensus is that the quality on display is quite astounding. Players from all ages have been hand-selected to come down, and many are showing abilities well beyond their ages.

Despite the friendly atmosphere, the games are played at full intensity.

Robertson is very pleased with both the enthusiasm and abilities shown thus far. "It gives me the chance to see what talent there is coming through the club. The standard of the players has been really good", said Robertson. "Some of the players there have played their way into contention for the first grade squad which is quite pleasing for me".

One thing is for sure, this team will have a very different look and feel to the Hakoah Opens sides of past years. There is an excitement in the air at these sessions that many say that they haven't felt for years.

As Robertson says, "I hope there is a real positive energy at the club after last year. We really need to pull every player and staff member together this season if we aim to be the best club in our respected division. I have been very well supported by the club from day one and I would like to thank them for that. In time I look to repay them by winning titles and putting this club back to the top where it belongs."

## **Youth Trials**

The trials for the Division 1 youth teams have now been held and the teams have been almost fully selected.

The trials saw a host of new players, mixed in with some of the old players from last year and the club stalwarts that have been with the club since its inception three years ago.

The coaches across the board were impressed, with Coaching Director Barry Walker relishing the opportunity to continue the success of the youth teams into 2011.

"We are obviously excited about the 5 squads and believe we can improve on 7th place in the overall Club Championship and having one minor Premiership and one team in the semis", said Walker.

"We have put together a fantastic group of coaches, all with great playing and extensive experience and the players will really enjoy their coaching. "

The coaches for the youth teams are:

U13: Barry Walker  
U14: Neil Jablonski  
U15: Steve Lawrence  
U16: Mark Robertson  
U18: Dennis Hoggart  
Coaching Director: Barry Walker

### **In Focus – Jon Marcuson – Chairman Maccabi Hakoah Feds**

2008 was a landmark year in many respects. Whilst the first black President was elected in the United States, and Michael Phelps demolished every Olympic record known to man; these all pail into insignificance when compared to the Hakoah youth teams inception into the then Youth Development League.

Instrumental in the push that saw Jewish football enter the rep world was Peter Grunfeld, Mick Vasin and Jon Marcuson, now Chairman of the Maccabi Hakoah Feds Committee

Whilst Marcuson is known to shy away from the spotlight, we have an exclusive interview with him on the objectives of the Committee, the vision for the future and the excitement for the 2011 season to come around.

**Q:** So Jon, trials are pretty much now complete for the youth teams. How have the teams shaped up?

**JM:** The trials have gone very well under the supervision of our coaching Director Barry Walker. The talent available and standard has improved significantly from last year. We in turn have been very successful in retaining the majority of our own clubs players from last year. We acknowledge how stressful the selection process is for both the players and their parents and accordingly we have tried to finalise the teams as quick as possible. However sometimes the last few spots are incredibly difficult to fill as we have almost 10 players fighting for 2 spots and all 10 can quite comfortably fill the positions. In these cases we have adopted an interim solution of a train on squad allowing the coach to see all players in a more relaxed environment over the next 5 weeks and then make the final decision before Xmas.

**Q:** Last season Hakoah (youth) won its first piece of silverware in the State League Division 1. What are your expectations for the youth teams for 2011, including the Club Championship?

**JM:** Having seen the quality of our squads and knowing the quality of our coach's I am quietly confident that we will have plenty of semi final football this year. The competition has expanded from 11 to 14 teams and we think this will definitely work in our favour as we do not think any one team will be dominant as has been the case over the last 2 years with first Sydney Uni and then Frazer Park dominating the competition. The feeling of winning a minor premiership in the U15's last year was exhilarating and something we are very keen to repeat in many of the age groups. The club championship is a long way away so let's talk about this when we reach the midway point.

**Q:** The Opens were, in short, a disaster last season. Are you confident that Mark Robertson is the man to change this?

**JM:** Mark Robertson, Robbo, is an absolute professional who understands exactly what is required to rectify last year's disaster. However a coach can only do so much and it is up to us to provide him with the tools to do his job. We think we are well on our way to providing the playing personnel to put Hakoah back where it should be. Right on top. We have enormous faith and confidence in Robbo and wish him all the best for the year ahead.

**Q:** What are the Committee's goals for the Opens in the upcoming season?

**JM:** This is very simple. Perry Rabin, Ron Malek, Jon Pillimer, Mick Vasin and myself, who make up the Feds committee, together with Dawn Herman our administrator and Peter Grunfeld our Operation Manager, want nothing less than for our Opens first grade team to come in the top 2 of Division 2, while our Reserve grade needs to be predominantly U20's players and make the top 5 comfortably. Coming in the top 2 should result in gaining promotion to Division 1.

**Q:** Are you excited for the pre-season to begin and for all the teams to get back into their football?

**JM:** Absolutely. The amount of work our organizing committee has put in behind the scene is huge. Remember we are all volunteers and our rewards come in the form of results and watching our club achieve success above all expectations. Watching some of the young talented boys play is a great thrill and having seen them start off as average players and develop into serious talented players is a tribute to our club and our coach's. It's been an amazing transformation. I personally believe we are on the brink of some very exciting results.

Please never underestimate the contribution made from our sponsors, Primo Smallgoods, Tablekraft and the Hakoah Club. Our sponsors allow us to run the club at the highest professional level possible and this enables us to hire professional coach's and play and train at quality grounds.

That is this week's edition of the Hakoah Feds Newsletter. For any comments, please email me at [mark.jamison00@gmail.com](mailto:mark.jamison00@gmail.com).