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MACCABI HAKOAH FEDS F.C.



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**In this week's edition we take a look back at the Maccabi Hakoah FEDS formation in 2008 before looking to the future of the Club from the Under 11's through to the Opens.**

Not many people know the back-story behind the Hakoah FEDS formation back in 2008. For most, Hakoah youth sides simply appeared in the rep division overnight. However it was the culmination of years of effort and work from a range of Maccabi Hakoah stalwarts. And this work is not nearly finished, but rather it is only just beginning.

Although a push into the rep leagues had been on the agenda for years, this story officially started back in mid-2007 when an opening for a youth side in the Youth Development League became apparent. I won't go into the minutia of the next months, but alas a Hakoah side was accepted, bringing about the biggest change in Jewish youth football in NSW ever.

Initially in these early stages, the club was in a league that was far more advanced than any had ever conceived. Despite having the right players and coaches, the teams struggled week in, week out. As Chairman Jon Marcuson recalls, "it was a battle".



The first ever Hakoah FEDS shirt presentation in 2008.

From Left to Right: Brad Karpin, Gilad Swartz, Dylan Blumberg

Relishing the wins where possible, the Committee refused to back down on their stance that this was the right step for this Club. They remained committed to ensuring that Jewish footballers had the best opportunities to play at the highest levels, under the best coaches, whilst winning football games. More so though, they saw what many had dreamed about but could never apply in practice; a

smooth, cohesive progression from youth to seniors, all being played at the highest levels.

Without mincing words, the first two seasons of the Hakoah Feds were limited in on-field success. The teams improved every week, yet all teams failed to make the semis. However, whilst lacking tangible success, the Club had made invaluable inroads into player retention and player returns from other clubs. This cannot ever be disregarded or minimised. As Marcuson says, “losing players is the killer of clubs. Suddenly, we could keep all our players as we had the best coaches, whilst still holding the key culture and foundation of our club, which is playing football with your mates at the highest level. No other rep club can offer this”.

So from the end of the second season, the master plan began to take form, which is now being put into effect. The Hakoah Feds Committee took over the running of the Feds seniors, and this allowed one body to oversee and ensure the successful operation of all seven elite teams. **Make no mistake; this is the highest level of Jewish football in NSW. Nothing else compares to it or comes even close to this standard.**

In the last season, the third since the Club’s formation, the youth teams became a force to be reckoned with. The then Under 15s (now Under 16s) not only won the minor premiership and made the grand final, but they did so playing attractive, attacking football that is a representation of where football in this country is heading and needs to go. And they did this all after suffering the psychological loss of losing their coach and mentor, Hakoah stalwart Ian Gray.

The other teams all pushed for semi finals spots, with the Under 18s coming the closest, falling on the last round of the competition. Heartbreaking in the short term; very encouraging in perspective.



Members of the U15 and U16 2009 Touring Side to Singapore.

So that brings us to the present day. The Hakoah Feds committee is pushing in both directions. They are working closely with the Maccabi Hakoah Junior Football club in the U11's and U12's to help develop these players thereby providing them with the best opportunity to be selected for the Hakoah Rep teams in the U13's. Hakoah Youth Coaching Director Barry Walker believes that he has already seen sufficient talent between the U11's and U12's team to ensure the majority of the intake into next year's rep team comes direct from the junior club.

However all truly successful clubs have strong first grade teams, therefore the First Grade side has been rebuilt and is the strongest it has been in years. The problems in the seniors have been erased after what has been described by many as "a miserable few years". Youngsters such as Moshe Wakil (16) and Sam Wrublewski (16) among others are being given opportunities to play with the First Grade squads as the club pushes through its youth policy. Marcuson absolutely believes that in 3 or 4 years time when our current U16's and U18's are all fighting for first grade spots, the club will have entered a period of a new golden era.

It can be seen that from the Under 11's all the way through to the First Grade side, we are all one cohesive unit. The seamless transition from youth to seniors is now clear and distinct. As Marcuson says, "there is only one way to go now, and that's up!"

### **Weekend Results**

The First Grade and Under 16s started the week off with a trip to Bonnyrigg on Wednesday to test their might against the Bonnyrigg White Eagles. Bonnyrigg is a Premier League side, with their First Grade regarded as title contenders.

The Under 16s opened the day with a stunning performance, falling 0-1 in a game that they dominated.

Coach Mark Robertson was very proud of the performance, saying, "The boys could have won the game". Robertson pointed to Josh Shubitz and Sam Wrublewski as the standouts.

The First Grade also put in a strong performance, but basic errors cost them, going down 0-3.

Robertson, coach of First Grade as well, said, "they played some attractive stuff but shot themselves in the foot with some ordinary mistakes that can be cancelled out with more work on the training ground in time". Standouts were the Kosmina brothers, Justin and Nathan, Neil Jablonski and Daan Ranshuijsen.

On the weekend, the Under 16s, 18s, Reserves and First Grade were up against Woden from Canberra.

In another impressive performance, the Under 16s won 6-1, the Under 18s battled to a 0-0 draw, whilst the Reserves were put away by the far better Woden, losing 0-3.



Adam Goldberg for the Under 16s beats the crowd to score the fifth goal.

First Grade were wasteful and timid against the physically bigger Woden. Although going 1-0 up early through DinoD'Agrosa, the boys were not playing their best football, and a penalty saw the scores leveled shortly after.

Woden began to run riot on Hakoah from then on, slotting away one more before the half, and then immediately after half time.

The final score was 2-5, and it seems that more work on fitness will be on the cards again for the First Grade.

This week the Hakoah Feds club, from Under 13s to First Grade, will be playing Sydney University at Hensley Athletic Field, Corner of Wentworth Avenue and Denison Street, Pagewood. The Under 13s kick off at 9am. The First Grade kicks off at 5pm.

That is this week's edition of the Hakoah Feds Newsletter. Until next time, let your passes find the man, your shots find the goal, and your skills find the girls.

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