

Papakura Senior Men's Mid Season Review

Firstly let me just say, it's good to be home! After 4 weeks on the road it was nice to return to Mclennan Park on Saturday to face Eilerslie, a game that ended 1-1 after a bright start and probably the best first 20 minutes we've played this year.

So we're halfway through the 2009 season and what can I say.....it's been.....emotional!!!!!! So far we've had everything from near misses, 2-0 down comebacks, sending off's and fierce-hard fought local derbies. We've gone from 3 points, to 1 point to no points, then back again. Mix in a little Eric Rush, take a pinch of comedy (Phil winning Manhunt – what a joke!), and add the now infamous “Car” goal celebration and it all adds up to an exciting first 12 rounds of the season.

After an eye opening preseason the reality of playing week in week out in one of New Zealand's toughest league competitions soon dawned upon the squad. It has to be said, I personally have never played with a better bunch of guys. All kinds of nationalities take that field at 2.45pm every Saturday and the fact that we can play through ninety minutes in harmony is a testament to our management team. I took a count in yesterday's warm-up and at any one time you could hear English, Spanish, Portuguese, Northern Irish and Kiwi (it's like the Queens English only with Churr and Bro added!) all being spoken on the field.

What's gone right

After being a part of the senior squad last year it's safe to say we're definitely heading in the right direction. The squad has a great atmosphere, a fantastic training ethic and the will to win. Both squads love to wear the shirt and are proud to be part of the “Blue Army”. We've had good wins away at Pukekohe and Onehunga-Mangere and we've taken three points at home from Mt Albert Ponsonby and Mangere. We've witnessed new talent arise from the squads youth players like Sam Scurrah, Michael Poulpoulpoulpoulos (is that the correct spelling?) and Daniel Billot. Stu has brought his strong leadership and “Northern Irishness” to the changing rooms. Old “Blue Bloods” like Shane Godden, Pete Street, Smitty and Russell have all added depth and have a renewed purpose. Not forgetting the Brazilians who have brought their own interpretation of passion and flair to the Stadium pitch. Anyone who has watched the First XI (and Reserves for that matter) play this year will tell you that times are changing...(discarding the first half away at Cambridge of course....) down in South Auckland.



Papakura's Darren Woolnough goes up against Onehunga Mangere's Steve May. Football NRFL Northern Region Football League 1st Division Onehunga Mangere v Papakura City FC Mangere Domain Mangere Saturday 6th June 2009. Photo Credit: Shane Wenzlick

Off the field

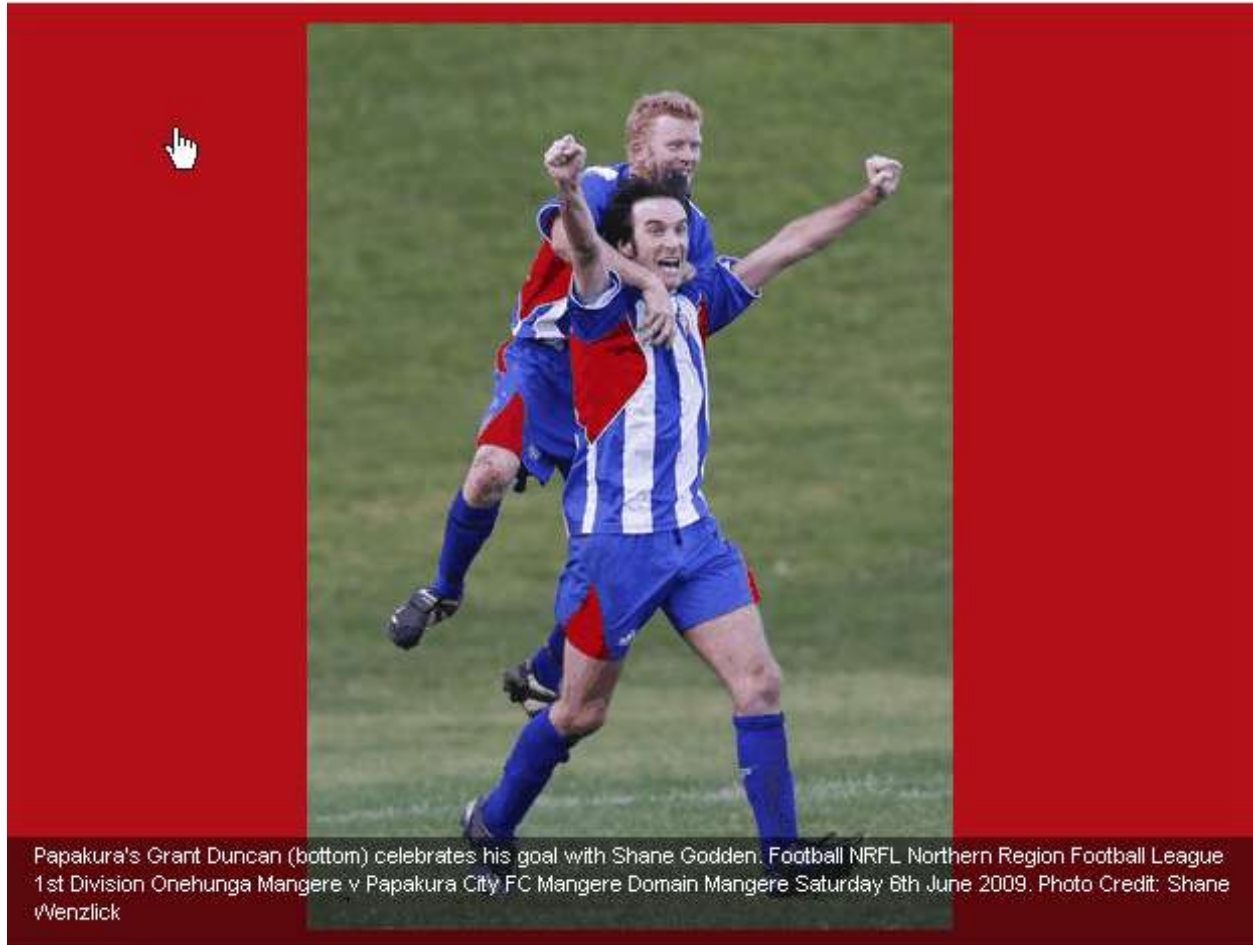
From threats of a dressing room walkout to training with the youth teams, this season has also been lively off the field. Stu and the guys have worked really hard to bring our newly renovated "Players Lounge" to life. The area offers a fantastic changing facility and a great place to get focused before the game. We've had great backing from our sponsors throughout the first half of the season. Special mention to Keith and the guys at PIC Insurance Brokers for our kitbags, Guada for all of their support and Manukau Hyundai for giving Dave Saturday' off. Various fundraisers have taken place over the past months. Eric Rush graced us with his presence, talking of his illustrious career and giving us tips on how to pick up British Royalty. The Bog hosted a comedy night that 150+ people attended. Aside from fundraising, Phil Parker has been named as Head Coach for Maori Futsal, who are looking to enter the Viking Futsal Tournament in Christchurch later this year. Oh and lastly, never let a Brazilian ride the luge in Rotorua...

Surprises

Having the same goal difference as Waiuku, yet they're 4 places above us in the league.....it's a funny old game.....

The vocal support coming from the bank! Keep up those Kura chants!!!! All we need is a big Bass-Drum, some flares and loo roll. Then it'll be just like playing back in Europe!

Coops's Belly-Button !



Disappointments

Phil's lack of rhythm during his pre-match dance offs!

Stu's inability to secure a victory on FIFA 2009

The standard of refereeing (Just kidding!?!?!?)

The Future

So what does the future hold? I predict a top 6 finish, anything less and I think they'd be genuine disappointment in the squad. Further to that we have the Samoa trip to look forward to and prepare for. Playing National Teams is never fun. Aside from that we have the 50th Anniversary celebrations at the end of the season.

Last but not least fans of the Blue Army can expect;

- “Bumblespud”,
- At least another new pair of awesome new boots for yours truly,
- Some more post match dance-offs, and
- A CLEAN SHEET!!!!!!

Victoria Concordia Crescit.

Wooly (First XI, #5)