

# Woollahra Colleagues Rugby Union Football Club

A photograph of a crowd of people at a rugby match. In the foreground, a person is wearing a blue mascot costume that looks like a bull or a similar animal with horns. The mascot is holding a blue flag on a pole. The crowd is mostly young men, many wearing blue and white clothing. The background shows a large stadium filled with spectators.

2023 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 2023**

PATRON: His Worship the Mayor of Woollahra

PRESIDENT: Cameron Ireland

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: Jack Williams

SECRETARY: Toby Cooke

TREASURER: Jason Monteath

COMMITTEE:

Nick Donlon, Harry Aboud, Hugo Mactier, Ollie Cowley, Sam Bush, Ben Hooper, Jock Windsor, Will Lembke, Max Wadell, Andrew Pahoff, Michael Bentley, Chris Price, PJ Foord, Will Harris.

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).

HONORARY AUDITOR: Michael Clifford



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## Trophy Winners 2023

### Team Captains

Halligan Cup	Jamal Workman
Judd Cup	Andrew Pahoff
Whiddon Cup	Ollie Cowley
Barbour Cup	Fitz Bowman
Burke Cup	Richard Harvey
Kentwell Cup	Olly Stump

### Team Coaches

Halligan Cup	James Taylor, Sam Taylor, Henry McInnes and Rob Hotchin
Judd Cup	Ben Abrahams
Whiddon Cup	Andrew McKillop & Nick Fletcher
Barbour Cup	Pete Minucos & Ben Wood
Burke Cup	Sam Deans & Charles Macdonald
Kentwell Cup	Ben Waters, Carl O'Sullivan & David Burnett

### Best & Fairest

Halligan Cup	Nathan Ramsay
Judd Cup	Kevin Prendergast
Whiddon Cup	Fred Regan
Barbour Cup	Henry Rourke
Burke Cup	Robin Allen
Kentwell Cup	William Smith
Club	Olly Stump

### Club Awards

Colleagues Honour Cap	Carl O'Sullivan
The David Gooch Award	William Lembke
Club Players' Player	Andrew Pahoff & Nic Clancy
Kentwell Cup Players' Player	Nic Clancy
Rookie of the Year	William Smith
Most Improved Player	Oskar Mitchell
Leading Try Scorer	Darcy Atkinson
Leading Point Scorer	Fin Nockles
Oldest and Boldest	Richard Harvey
The John Anderson Trophy	Cam Ireland

### 100 games

Jamal Workman  
William Yeo  
Michael Bentley  
Mark Logan

### 200 games

Andrew Pahoff  
Tim Martin

### 300 games

Stuart Hughes  
Chris Schliebs



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## President's Report

I am very pleased to present the Woollahra Colleagues Annual Report for 2023 and what a remarkable year it was.

2023 was always going to be a tough one to follow our extremely successful 2022 season. To say that our Club did it in spades would be an understatement. Congratulations to all players, coaches, supporters and sponsors for your combined efforts and contribution in ensuring that Colleagues took out the Division 1 Club Championship for a record 29th time. In the presentation of the Club Championship award, the President of NSW Rugby suggested to all other Division 1 Clubs that if they wanted to model their club on any other, then Colleagues would be the one he'd pick. This speaks volumes to the respect that our entirely volunteer led Rugby Club carries in the wider rugby community. I am extremely proud to have been part of it for the last 25 years.

I look back at the year we have just had and reflect on how amazing this Club of ours is. The fact that we are run entirely by volunteers, a lot of who are still at university or just starting out in their careers is truly remarkable. Running a Club of our size doesn't just happen so to each and every one of our Members who contribute to this from coaches, to committee, to the unsung heroes just lending a hand, a sincere Thankyou.

Player numbers this year were slightly down on previous years however through the tireless efforts of our Executive, particularly our Treasurer Jason Monteath, subscription income was slightly higher than last year. Thank you to everyone who does pay their subs in full on time. Without everyone contributing, we cannot function.

Grants received this year were circa \$12k which has been extremely helpful in covering some of the operating costs. There are discussions ongoing with council around some further club house developments in the very short term to help us attract female playing members and a much larger discussion ongoing about a Master Plan which will require significant financial contribution from the Club, Council and also State Government.

A huge thank you to our financial supporters Royal Oak Hotel, Bellevue Hotel, Qube Logistics, Fortius Funds Management, McGrath Property Surry Hills, Verandah Bar, Gordon brothers, Hart Rural, Jan Logan Jewellery, Roberts Trading, Sydney Commercial Interiors, Ryans Bar and Woodstock Resources. We look forward to partnering with you again next season! Thank you for your ongoing support.

Next year I would really like to see coaches take advantage of the training courses available via NSW Rugby. This is an initiative we need to support as a Club and get more organised to ensure we are taking advantage of these things. Additionally, it would be great to see more players complete their Assistant Referee accreditation as well as obtain their RSA. More people with these accreditations makes lighter work for the few that cover these tasks now.

Our annual Long Lunch held at the start of the season was again a huge success, both from a catching up with old mates' perspective and financially. Ian Roberts, Richard Harry and Tom Bowman entertained a large crowd of Old Boys, current players and Sponsors. 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.

A massive thankyou to all our coaches in 2023. We have said it countless times before however it can never be reinforced enough. These guys commit so much time and energy to this Club each and every week which is a huge drain on both their work but in a lot of cases, family time. Your commitment to the success of your respective teams and the passion you show for the Club is greatly appreciated. Benny, Carl, Db and Ash in Kentwell, Sam, Charles and James in Burke, Macca and Fletch in Whiddon, Benny A, in Judd, Taylors, Henry and Rob in Sutho's, Woodsy, Minu and Boydie in Colties. You are all awesome. The way you go about your roles and the way you carry yourselves and set an example for the players, we are truly fortunate to have you all. A special call out to Benny Waters who has been our Club Coach now for a very long time, Benny has been a rock of support for



me over the years which has made my life a lot easier. And to Carl, our Hour Cap winner this year. The effort you put in behind the scenes is incredible and a huge bonus for us to have as a club.

A new addition in 2023 was the Cocktail Bar for home games. I love this kind initiative! To Esther and Amber, thank you. I look forward to enjoying a few refreshing beverages on the sideline next year.

Our 2023 Kentwell team was dominated by colts from 2022, and some seasoned campaigners. All of whom should be immensely proud of their achievements this year. Some exceptional performances hindered by some inconsistencies meant that they just missed out on the finals. To narrowly miss out on the finals whilst extremely disappointing for the group of players and coaches I know that you have the building blocks of a cracking team that can serve Colleagues well for the next decade. Build on your experiences and make 2024 yours.

What an incredible year for the Burkies boys. A team with an abundance of experience proved a great recipe for success. To be fair, after their slight hiccup in round 1, no one really looked like contesting the Burke Cup against this team in 2023. Whilst there were some close games, they showed their dominance week in week out. Making a Grand Final is a major achievement, winning one is unmeasurable. Congratulations to all involved in the success of 2023. I suspect we'll see a few of you on the balcony next year!

Whiddon went through a tough middle part of the season however had a cracking finish. Winning the sudden death game GF qualifier versus Mosman will go down as one of their seasons best. Unfortunately, the boys didn't get the chocolates in the Grand Final however the spirit they showed as a team and the entertaining style of play kept us all entertained. Congrats to you all and a massive thank you to Fletch and Macca for your leadership week in week out.

Our Judd Cup this year represented a mix of exuberant youth and some extremely experienced Old heads. This team dominated all year (on and off the field) however were unlucky to miss out one game short of the big dance. Watching this team come together this year, welding together an established group of Juddies with the new faces was a great example of what our Club is about. Congrats on a great year.

Huge credit to our Sutherland/Halligan Cup team this year who had some major logistical challenges to deal with. Given the structure of the competition now with less clubs fielding the numbers, there are no regular games for Sutherland Cup. As a result, our Sutherland Cup team, often do not get the opportunity to play with the rest of the Club, often travelling to the far stretches of Sydney for a game. A significant challenge to the boys from the Eastern Suburbs! The commitment shown each week culminated in finishing in finals for both competitions.

Our Colties also managed to book themselves a spot in the Grand Final this year after the sudden death semi. The way in which they handled the pressure of the semi-final and to defeat St Pats (who had been the dominant team all season) in such a clinical way was awesome to watch. For those old enough, I look forward to seeing a lot of you progress into grade next year and for the guys still in Colts, one more year together and another trip around the sun will only set you up for further success in 2024.

To our Committee and my fellow Executive thank you again for your support this year. Toby and Jack worked tirelessly throughout the year to make sure our Club absolutely hummed. You blokes are unreal. Monty again kept us on the straight and narrow while Nic (Scrappy) was the foundation in the Clubhouse and on game day. Thank you to you all and to the extended committee.





As I step aside this year after 5 years as President, I want to take the opportunity to say thankyou to the wider Colleagues Family, current players and past for being such an important part of my life for the past 25 years. I have absolutely loved every moment, met lifelong mates, shared some memorable experiences and I am extremely proud to be a Blue Giant. I look forward to sharing a tin with you all on the sidelines next year.

Cameron Ireland  
President

## 2023 Sponsors





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## Club Captain Report

'Another successful colleagues' season'. The past year has proven to be another resounding success for the Blue Giants, as an impressive six out of the seven grades and Colts teams demonstrated their exceptional prowess by advancing to the final's series. This remarkable achievement showcases the dedication, skill, and teamwork that permeate the entire organization. The Blue Giants have consistently exemplified excellence, and this latest triumph is a testament to the collective efforts of the players, coaches, and support staff. Notably, the accomplishment extends beyond mere participation in the finals, as every team managed to secure a coveted position within the top 5 rankings. Such a comprehensive display of talent and commitment speaks volumes about the depth and quality of the Blue Giants' program, instilling pride in the community and reinforcing the organization's standing as a powerhouse in the realm of competitive sports.

Moreover, it would be remiss of me to proceed with this report without extending special recognition to our Whiddon and Barbour teams, both of which successfully reached the grand final. However, I must reserve an exceptional acknowledgment for our Burkies, who not only advanced to the pinnacle of the competition but also clinched victory, bringing home the coveted silverware. Their outstanding achievement is a testament to the dedication, skill, and resilience of the Burkies, and there all Kiwi coaching staff.

As the Blue Giants bask in the glory of another successful year, it is undoubtedly evident that the members of the 2023 playing and coaching cohort have set a high standard for excellence that will inspire future generations within the club and continue to fuel the team's enduring legacy.

In 2023, the club not only demonstrated excellence on the field but also showcased significant achievements off the field. The year witnessed notable developments, including the welcoming of new sponsors. Sponsors are the life blood of the club and with the introduction of many new sponsors it is evident to see that the club is only moving forward.

A notable addition this year was the unveiling of the new 'Girls cocktail bar'. This new feature has met with resounding success. Beyond its internal impact on the club, the cocktail bar has reverberated positively throughout the wider community. We hope to see the more and more girls getting involved in the club as it is evident that it will only make the club a stronger presence in the community.

I want to express my appreciation to the coaching staff and the entire playing group for their significant contributions to the remarkable success of the 2023 season. Serving as the club captain during this period has been an absolute privilege, and it's thanks to the collective efforts of the team that we've achieved such impressive results.

I would also like to make a special thanks to the Committee and Scrappy and Hoppa. Being on the committee and running the bar is mostly a thankless job but the team are always happy to work tirelessly to ensure the cogs of the club keep on moving.

Lastly a huge thanks to my fellow executive committee members Cam, Monty and Cookie who work tirelessly every week to ensure that all players, coaches and community members get to experience colleagues for the wonderful community it is.

Yours in Rugby

LJ





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## Treasurer's Report

The Blue Giants had a stellar year on the field with the Bruce Graham Shield being returned to its rightful home on Manion Ave and three teams playing on grand final day. Well done to all the Magnificent Men who donned the Blue Jersey in 2023. 2024 is positioning itself to be another great year for the Club.

This year we hosted two special events in the form of the Long Lunch and a 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 clubhouse bar and canteen which are occurring over the offseason. Support at all home games was strong on the sidelines and in the clubhouse where the new cocktail bar was warmly received. All of these income streams and controlled spending meant we improved the cash position of the Club year on year but delivered an operating loss due to 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 also saw Sydney Commercial Interiors, Woodside Resources and Roberts Trading come on as new sponsors which we would like to maintain and continue into 2024 and beyond. 2023 saw the continuation of sponsorship from Qube, Fortius, Veranda Bar and SVP Partners, as well as Mark Foy through McGrath Property, John Ryan through Ryan's Bar, Gordon Brothers, MJ Bale and Jan Logan.

The support from sponsors throughout 2023 who have stuck with us through these 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 a Ladies Day and the Long Lunch. The Long Lunch profited from the returned of the Jersey Calcutta and another batch of heritage jerseys around the Club. Ladies Day was threatened by rain which fortunately held off for the majority of the day allowing for a strong showing on and off the field. Both 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.

To Club President, Club Secretary and Club Captain, Cam Ireland, Toby Cooke and Jack Williams, thanks for a great year. It was great to have Cookie step up into a formal leadership role this year. The passion shown by these guys for the Club is second to none. Cams receiving of the John Anderson Trophy is a fitting way for him to conclude his time as Club President and a testament to his time at the Club – 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 2023.

I would also like to thank Nick Donlon for running everything gameday-related (aptly supported by Harry Aboud and Artie), and to David Gooch for managing the gear and merchandise (for a final year since establishing the merchandise platform in 2016). Clubs the size of ours would cease to function without the generous input of these guys, 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 Montearth

Honorary Treasurer



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## Club Secretary Report

2023 Division One Club Champions could be enough to summarise this whole report. However, this only covers our on-field success, and with another year of great events 2023 will go down as a year where club champions was the desert.

The year started off with a little entrée in Boorowa where Colleagues took a slim line up to the Boorowa beer and rugby festival. The commitment of some players was there before they left Sydney, with 4 players hiring a car to make the 3 hour trip down the Hume Highway. We took on Orange Emus and Wagga Waratahs with both teams being well renowned for their success in their local competitions however with Colleagues playing some lightening fast running rugby, we came away winners in both games. We were generously hosted by the Boorowa Hotel, a proud sponsor of the Boorowa Goldies and all the boys thoroughly enjoyed their time down south.

Preseason was heating up in more of a literal sense with March 2023 being one of the hottest preseasons we've had. We fielded a combined Burke and Kentwell to face Newport in scorching heat to contest a game between Second Division 1<sup>st</sup> grade premiers (Newport) and First Division Kentwell premiers (Colleagues). Unfortunately, Newport were too good this year but it was a great initiative led by Dave Burnett. Our second trial came against a fired up Lindfield club in Rushcutters bay and it was another boiling day was made tougher by Lindfield out to prove a point. Finally, our annual Mosman trial took place just before Easter at a drenched Rawson Oval. Safe to say preseason was no walk in the park in 2023.

The year kicked off with a great new players night held at the Club, giving all the old 2022 players a chance to reconnect and welcome some new faces to the club. Following that we fielded 5 grade teams and 2 colts to head to Hunters Hill for round one. Over the first few rounds our Juddies were red hot and enjoyed a long streak of wins while the Burke Beast conceded their first and only loss as they became the team to watch in 2023.

2023 welcomed a new kind of off field attraction with two partners of Colleagues players taking on the brave task of setting up a cocktail bar named 'Sideline Spritzes'. The success was immediate with women gathering down at Woollahra two oval beneath the club house for a drink at each home game. The bar was such a success they were asked to serve at Convicts community day, and they soon became a household name in the east. They gave an even bigger boost to our 2023 ladies day which was held on the final home game of the year. The cocktail bar coupled with the brilliant performance by Will Harris on the microphone, ensured the 2023 ladies day event was a massive success.

The off-field events didn't stop there with a full house present at the 2023 Colleagues Long Lunch held in Darling Harbour. We had a great number of current players, old boys, friends and sponsors with everyone thoroughly enjoying the day. The following day we held our old boys day with a few sore heads keen to watch the Blue Giants take on Hunters Hill. Kentwell put on a show to round out a great day at Blue Giant Stadium.

The 9 team competition in 2023 meant there was an additional bye on top of wet weather rounds and unlike last year we were fortunate enough to not have any games rained out. This stop-start season meant players had more time to rest and recover but stunted the flow of the year for some teams. Morale was lifted with Clutch and NSW Rugby TV teaming up to film 5 games a week from Judd Cup through to Kentwell including Barbour.

Our road to the finals saw 4 grade teams and colts head into the preliminary finals. A great result and well deserved for all the boys involved. Roll forward to the grand final day at the newly renovated Concord Oval Colleagues fielded a Whiddon Cup team, Barbour and Burke. Whiddon came close but could not complete a fairy tale season ending while Barbour fought all game to finish a few points shy. Burke Cup capped of a great year winning in good fashion to give the Blue Giants some grand final silverware for 2023. The day was capped off with our own David Gooch being awarded the Peter Kelly Medal for Service to Rugby for his significant contribution to Colleagues and subbies rugby for 50 years. We could not be happier to go out division one champions on such a big year for David. We thank him for everything he's done over the years and are very proud of him being given the award for service to NSW rugby.



The 2023 finals were capped off with a great gathering of players, parents, family and friends who attended the post finals function that Saturday afternoon. It was very special to celebrate the season with a great group of people.

A big thanks also goes to Ken and the Sydney Convict's, our brother club who supported us throughout the year and were a friendly opposition during the Halligan Cup season.

We had a few months to take in the world cup and during that time I attended a memorial for a former Colleague and Kentwell player Mal Gill who sadly passed this year. He always remembered his time at Colleagues and will be cheering on the blue giants from above for years to come.

The club were reunited at the 2023 season presentation in November with team awards and a special Burke Cup premiers jersey presentation. We were very lucky to have David Gooch in attendance who awarded our outgoing club president Cam Ireland The John Anderson Trophy for his service to Colleagues. This trophy has only been awarded 8 times in its history and was last awarded 9 years ago. A fitting end for Cam who has dedicated so much time and energy into this club. We thank Cam and look forward to seeing him down at the club in 2024 in a less official capacity.

On the topic of thanks, a big shout out goes to the coaches and management staff who work all winter (and some over summer) to make sure their teams are the best they can be week in week out.

To the Committee, Cam Ireland, Jason Monteath and Jack Williams, thanks for a great year and for welcoming me into the executive this year. I was given a first-hand view of the hard work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the club in such good shape and to help bring the best out of the players on and off the field.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time this year with a great group of men and look forward to the challenges and success of 2024.

Toby Cooke

Secretary





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## Club Coach 2023 Report

2023 proved to be another very strong year for the mighty Blue Giants across the park, with all team's bar Kentwell making the finals and the Bruce Graham Shield coming home to Blue Giant Stadium, the playing group and coaches should be very proud. With an odd number of teams in the First Division Competition for the first time in forever, along with the shortened format draw, it felt like we had more weeks off than we were playing footy and pleasingly we go back to an 8-team competition next year.

Colleagues continued to develop its game plan across the grades around promoting the footy and keeping the ball in play. This has been a successful cornerstone of what we have been doing in recent years and proving often be the difference when we play bigger, heavier teams. Much of the development of this game plan has been from Carl O'Sullivan and Dave Burnett and their attention to detail and skills-based training deserves recognition. Another big focus this year was defence, winning the club champs can not be done with out a strong attitude when it comes to defending your line. The Blue Giants had that this year, and the results are reflective.

The season started well with a trip to Hunters Hill and the momentum continued to build from there culminating in a final round against Blue Mountains at home. To get 6 out of 7 teams into the finals, 3 into grand finals and to bring home the Burke Cup is a strong year by any standard and one the Giants should be proud of.

### Kentwell Cup

Coming off the back of a premiership in 2022, there was significant expectation on the Kentwell team this year but with a lot of changes to the playing roster. Whilst the results weren't what the team had hoped them to be, the number of young players that stepped up to first grade this year was incredible, and I would be surprised if there had ever been a team with as many "first year out of colts players". Each week we had between 9 and 11 players playing their first year in grade. The transition to grade footy from colts is a particularly steep learning curve but this young group took it in their stride and made the most of every opportunity. Aply lead by Olly Stump and great senior leadership group, the boys worked hard for every win and were only pipped at the post in terms of making finals by a bonus point of two. There were a number of highlights, but the first win of the season against St Pats, post a disappointing result against Drummoyne the week before showed how much talent and heart the boys had. At times execution let us down, but that comes with time in the jersey and with such a young team it clear that we will have a great Kentwell group for many years to come. Well done the Carl, DB and Ash for guiding the boys around the park and for the players and those who stuck around to cheer the boys on, well done. Onwards and upwards for 2024.

### Burke Cup

The Burke Cup team had a sensational season culminating in taking out the premiership against a fast-finishing Drummoyne in a very exciting grand final. The consistency of this team was to be commended and they took control of the competition early, with just one regular season loss, they carried straight through to the final. There was a senior group of players in this team that provided a great platform and the stability to bring a number of young players through who were in their first year of grade. Their forward pack had a great season being able to control first phase ball and retain multiple phase possession on a regular basis. Any team that can consistently do this, provides such a great attacking base for their backs and the Burkies took full advantage of it. With a great kicking game and an ability to get great advantage line early and then move the ball wide, there were very few teams that could stay with the mighty Burkies and a very well deserved win. Congratulations to Sam and Charles for steering the team through such a great season and well done to the players. The Burke Cup hasn't been home for a few years now, but it is wonderful to have it back and look forward to the boys defending their title next year.

### Barbour/Radford Cup

Another great year for the colts program, with 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



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culture of the players and that set by the coaches. Minu, Woodsie and Boydie have done an outstanding job of bringing this group together and the results are testament to that.

The boys play an enterprising style of footy, fast paced and with a willingness to move the ball wide to get and attack from any part of the park. Both teams were unlucky not to get the silverware this year, but in particular the Barbour Cup team in a grand final against Forrest. Whilst it would be difficult to accuse the author of being in any way biased towards the Blue Giants, it did feel as though the Barbour boys were on the wrong end of a number of very close calls with the referee. Despite not giving an inch and playing to the final bell, the boys couldn't get past the weight of possession and momentum and weren't able to get the prize at the end of the day. A great season and if the colts program is a fair indicator of the health of the Blue Giants, then we have many years of good footy ahead of us. Congratulations gents and look forward to seeing you down there again in 2024.

#### Whiddon Cup

The Whiddon Cup team was another Colleagues team in the grand final after a slow start to the season but a very strong finish. Making a grand final from third on the ladder was impressive as the Whiddos boys came up against some very slick competition. Welcoming a new coach, Fletch, along with a returning Macca, they boys built nicely into the season and were able to lift a gear and find their way into a grand final. In the GF, they gave the much-fancied Waverly a fair fright as well with it only just slipping away in the last quarter of the game. The way the boys played the grand final was exactly the way they played all year. Every minute the ball was in play was a contest and it wasn't ever through lack of effort that they didn't get there in the end. With a good game plan, ability to play field position and a particularly strong ability to finish out wide, the Whiddos boys were a great team to watch and a great bunch of blokes as well. I can only imagine with getting as close as they did this year, there will be plenty of hunger to get stuck in next year and bring home the premiership. Well done gents, many oppositions thought you wouldn't get there but you proved plenty wrong during the season.

#### Judd Cup

The Judd team welcomed new coaches this year assisting Ben Abrahams, being the Moral Merchant and Nick Keighley to the brains trust. The Juddies boys had a great season and only dropped two games during the round matches and finished second on the table. With a huge differential of 271 points, the boys could throw the footy around but also defend tough when needed. With a great mix of older heads and young players coming through, the Juddies were a well-balanced team and the results showed. Built around a formidable set piece, the backs used the platform to move the ball around with ease and piled the points on as required. It was very disappointing for the boys not to be in the GF after the season they had, but narrow losses to Mosman and Waverly saw them fall one short of the GF this year. No doubt we will see the Juddernaught roll on next year and look forward to the boys seeing if they can go a few steps better in 2024. Well done to the players and coaches.

#### Sutherland/Halligan Cups

With many clubs in the comp not being able to provide regular games for our Suthos and Halligan players, there is much to admire about the way these two teams travel to wherever to play whomever to ensure they get a game of footy. Both finished high on the table, but both were agonisingly short of getting the prize. What else is commendable is the way these two teams look after each other and support each other as and when required with player often playing two games and two different venues to make sure the Blue Giants and properly represented. They both play an enterprising style of footy and lack no heart when it comes to defending their line often against much larger teams. You fellas are the backbone of the club, and we appreciate all that you do both on and off the field. Congrats to both teams on a great season and look forward to seeing you in 2024.

In any season at Colleagues, especially one as successful as 2023, there are so many people to thank. To the old boys and supporters, you certainly make it worth while for the boys each week. To the executive and key administration roles, thank you for all the work you do to make sure everything is done so the boys can play their footy. It is often unnoticed and often thankless, but it is the most



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important part of our club. To the physios who look after the boys each week, thank you. To the coaches, what a great year and testament to you as leaders and those we trust to continue to build our culture. Well done and look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Finally, to the players, thank you for all your hard work, good humour and for the way you play the game as a Blue Giant. I look forward to seeing you down at Blue Giant stadium in 2024 and to seeing you tear it up again next season. Get around you mates and get them down to the greatest club in the world. As everyone always says, everyone should be a Blue Giant at least once in their life!!!!

Thank you for the honour of being your club coach, it is just the best footy club in the world, and I am honoured to be involved.

Blue Giants – never in doubt

Benny Waters



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## Kentwell Cup 2023 Report

It was always going to be a tough ask to go back-to-back for the Kentwell boys and the season was one that showed plenty of promise but one that we let slip at crucial times. With many of the 2023 premiership players stepping away this year through injury (no more Oztag Bushy) to overseas travel (Scotland is still recovering from the tour of Size) and a few blokes finally admitting they are old (DK, Price) it truly was a year of rebuilding. With gaps to fill we were blessed with a very willing and able group of young blokes coming through the system with what I am sure is a record number of first year grade players pulling on the Kentwell jumper. It is a testament to the young blokes who stepped up each week (with 9 to 11 blokes who were all 21 at the start of the year) and the excellent colts program the club has run in recent years (thanks Minu, Woodsie and Boydie) that we went so close to make the finals and only missing out by a couple of bonus points. What is also says is we are looking very strong for years to come as well with such a good, committed group and another batch coming along behind them.

The preseason started well with a detailed program put together by Carl and DB building on the success of the previous year and based on being a team that plays to our strengths and isn't afraid to promote the ball. Preparedness to work hard and put the effort in off the field has been a hall mark of this team for the last few years and this year was no different. With the majority of the Kentwell team making the effort to be there two nights a week, the team set a high standard for themselves and the club.

Well lead by Olly Stump as captain and the senior leadership group of Nic Clancy, Charlie Crawford and Jack Murphy, the team had some very memorable moments that stand out. The turnaround from a heavy loss to Drummoyne to a strong win against Pats was a reflection how well the team could play when they applied themselves and stuck to the game plan. There were a number of other great games, Waverley at Waverley, Blue Mountains at Blue Giant Stadium but the game of the year was Hunters Hill at Colleagues. If that can be our standard for 2024, then we will go a long way to taking out the premiership. The attack was strong but the brutality in defence was the difference. The way the boys dug in on their line and the line speed during general play was something to behold. Whilst we couldn't hold this type of form for enough minutes during the game, what it did show is the capability of the team and the character of the players.

The set piece was good and held its own under real pressure, the backline play was strong of the solid platform provided here and the individual efforts of the boys was great, it was our ability to operate as a team that made it difficult at times.

There is much to take away from the season, but much to work on for 2024. Better execution and game control are a couple of key areas of focus as opposition teams were able to target us in certain areas of the field and better control their outcomes. Ability to be patient in attack and to build pressure over extended periods will also be key as we look to be better able in implement our structures and play to our plan. However, none of this is unexpected with such a young team coming up against some very seasoned campaigners and all of the areas of concern are areas we can address with time in the jersey and working hard at our game plan and the skills required to execute against it.

Thank you to all the Blue Giants who pulled on a Kentwell jumper this year, to those that stepped up when we needed you and those that stayed behind with boots on to support the team, your willingness to get involved is most appreciated. To the executive and admin function, thank you for all that you do to get the boys on the field each week. To the supporters and old boys, thank you for being there to cheer the boys on, it is always easier when you lot are there.

To DB and Ash, thank you for all your hard work and the effort and enthusiasm you put into what we do. For the hours spent watching film, creating videos for feedback and working on the set piece, we would be lost without you. Readers are probably saying, What about Carl?!?! This year this unreal human gets a separate call out. With the coaching group stretched between work, family duties, etc, Carl carried a huge additional workload. His preparedness to find different and new ways to get stuff done, to his time spent providing individual feedback and video clips to help the boys understand what needs to be improved through to his work on and off the field, well done mate and thanks. We are lucky to have you and no doubt a better team as well. Recognition of your service through the Honour Cap is a fitting reward for all you have achieved.

Well done to the Burkies – huge result and a great outcome.



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To the players, we expect a lot of you, and it is expected in the toughest comp in subbies rugby. Despite it not being the result we wanted, you have set us on a pathway to many strong years of rugby ahead. Well done and can't wait to see you blokes rip in in 2024.

Go the Giants!!!

Benny





## Burke Cup 2023 Report

In a season that will be etched in the annals of Burke Cup rugby history, the Colleagues men overcame a round one loss to win 13 games on the trot on the way to a Premiership victory.

At the heart of the Burkies' triumph was a delicate blend of seasoned veterans, exuberant youth, and a robust core of players whose bonds had been forged through years of shared victories and defeats. This unique amalgamation of experience and enthusiasm proved to be the team's secret weapon, creating a synergy that propelled them to greatness. This year's side built their game on ruthless pragmatism and turning pressure into points. The lads were happy to work hard and be patient, with the rewards coming on the scoreboard. Their on field success was matched only by the cohesive spirit and mateship that grew throughout the year.

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 Robin Allen showcased a blend of power and finesse that left opponents in awe, while prop Hugo Mactier's passion for his teammates became the stuff of legends. Oskar Mitchell, the silent assassin and unyielding number 7, demonstrated a relentless work ethic that inspired his teammates to push their limits. A particular highlight of the season was the milestone achieved by William Yeo, who marked his 100th game for the club. Yeo's dedication, loyalty, and skill have left an indelible mark on the team, becoming a symbol of the club's enduring legacy.

In the backs, halfback Jack King continues to age like a fine wine and inside centre Ralph Mitchell was a consistent force with ball in hand. Fullback Fin Knockles brought a sought-after commodity, with his metronomic goalkicking accuracy keeping the scoreboard ticking over and proving crucial in a number of tight fixtures.

It's an overused cliché but our success throughout 2023 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 a good chunk of the side return next year to defend their title.

Thanks must also go to the club's leadership team of Cam, Monty, Cookey, and LJ, who once again played a crucial role in the club's success. Despite all the headlines and rubbish that's polluting the game at a professional level, Colleagues continues to show what can be achieved when a dedicated group of good men come together. The tireless efforts of men like Boothy, Goochy and a wide range of Colleagues greats cleared the path for the current generation and the 2023 Burkies cohort looks forward to joining them on the balcony in years to come.

Thanks for a great year.

Cheers, Sam Deans, Charles Macdonald, James Robins – Burke Cup coaching staff 2023.





## Whiddon Cup 2023 Report

### A Tale of Two Halves: Consistency Builds Cohesion, Grand Final Achieved

The 2023 season for the Woollahra Colleagues Rugby Club can be summarized as a tale of two halves. The first half was marked by inconsistency and a lack of cohesion, with the team struggling to find its rhythm and establish a winning formula. At the half way point a finals spot looked unlikely after consecutive losses to Forrest, Drummoyne and Waverley. The squad was looking shallow thanks to injuries and the annual exodus to the European training camp in Mykonos. However, the second half saw a remarkable turnaround, as the players gelled together and developed a strong sense of cohesion. This newfound unity propelled the team and they won all games aside from Mosman to book third place on the ladder. This result was bittersweet as the opponent they were to face in week one of the finals was Mosman. Wary of the size difference between both teams Colleagues adapted an expansive game plan that saw our little general George Mallat run in a hattrick. The game was finished by a try of the year contender where the majority of the team had hands on the ball at some stage to go 80 meters to score.

The grand final was a fitting climax to the season's remarkable journey. The team played with heart and determination, pushing Waverley to the very limit. While the final result wasn't in their favour, the players should be immensely proud of their achievement. Reaching the grand final is a testament to their unwavering commitment, hard work, and the development of a strong team culture based around their motto "small but strong".

The 2023 season has provided valuable lessons and a strong foundation for future success. The team has learned the importance of consistency, cohesion, and an unwavering commitment to achieving its goals. There was a great balance between experience, highlighted by Will Lembke showing the young bucks how to score match winning tries, and youth with halfback Wiley Anderson and second rower Tom Wickham exciting prospects for the Club and no doubt future Kentwell players. Uncle Macca and Fletch believe the future looks bright for the Whiddon Wombats.

Special shout out to Mike Bentley who ran out for his 100th game as a Blue Giant. This barnstorming kiwi popped up wherever he was needed and was a welcomed member of the Whiddon Cup team this year, leading the way with strong carries and defence.





## Judd Cup 2023 Report

The Colleagues Judd Cup 2023 season was a season full of stellar performances, big defensive efforts and an 8-man scrum that could pop any subbies front row. The Judd Cup men were yet again under the guidance of club stalwart Benny Abrahams and joined by coaching newcomers, Will Harris and Nick Keighley with Harry About (DA) taking up the managerial duties. Thursday night training sessions became the heartbeat of the season, fostering not only skill development but also a strong camaraderie that was sponsored by XXXX cans. Andrew Pahoff's courageous captaincy was on display again with Kevin Prendergast's stepping up as leader during Pahoff's European absence.

The season started strong for the Juddanaughts who were undefeated at the half way mark of the season and were the team to beat. The dominant forward pack build on morale and experience that had played many seasons together was boosted by the inclusion of Cal Sauer, Rory Hennessy and Zac Newman. The forwards set the platform for a youthful backline that included many Juddmen debutants such as, Wiley Anderson, Issac Gulliver, Duechar Allen and Nick Hay-McKenzie who could score tries from any part of the field.

Despite leading the comp for much of the season, Colleagues Judd Men faced heartbreak in the finals, losing the semi-final to Mosman and then bowing out of the preliminary final by less than 5 points on the bell. A critical moment against Waverley in the dying seconds of the preliminary final will linger in the minds of the boys over the off season, where the option to take a tap instead of a scrum against a man down Waverley pack could of changed the game. But that's rugby. The season showcased our resilience and strength, leaving most Judd men desperate to come back in 2024 for Judd glory.

The team's cohesive experience was evident in a forward-dominant pack known for its power and a scrum that made opposing teams fear facing us. Stalwarts like Campbell Brister, Will Harris, Rhys Seminia, Cal Sauer, Nathan Smith, Kevin Prendergast, Max Waddell, Johnathon Lobban, James Peck, Nick Graham, Billy Gosper and Andrew Pahoff formed a formidable and mobile unit.

In the backs, a blend of seasoned veterans, Jack Williams, Nick Keighley, George Storrier, James Kilby, Hugh Beith and Max Power combined with a number of first-year Judd Men such Harry Ottley, Deuchar Allan, PJ Foord, and Jock Winsdor that injected youthful energy, skill and plenty of humour.

The Judd Cup boys would like to make a special mention to our long time coach Benny Abrahams who has coached us on and off the field for many seasons. Ben has announced that he will be stepping aside as coach leaving big boots for Harris and Keighley to fill next year. Benny has put his heart and soul into building this team and cannot be thanked enough for his efforts. Not to worry, I'm sure you can catch him for a XXXX next year on the sidelines.





## Sutherland/Halligan Cup 2023 Report

The 2023 Sutherland Cup squad saw Henry 'Minivan' McInnes and Rob Hotchin join the coaching staff. Led by captain Jamal Workman and Sam & James Taylor, the team had high hopes for 2023.

Due to the competition structure the team were playing in both the Sutherland Cup and Halligan Cup competitions, which saw the boys playing across club byes and wet weather weeks with a shot at two premierships.

A first round loss to Kings Old Boys (L19-10) was followed by an impressive 10 wins in a row, with standout performances from Jarid Kolver, Tommy Ridhalgh and Dan McKay leading to big wins against Mosman (W27-0 and W39-0), Sydney Harlequins (W19-0 and W29-0), and Hills (W57-0), two tight wins against a tough Drummoyne side (W15-10 and W17-15), a huge win against eventual Sutherland Cup winners Waverley (W36-5), and a spirited win against eventual Halligan Cup winners Lindfield (W15-12), their only loss of the season.

Unfortunately, the back end of the season saw half the squad depart to Europe which saw the momentum slow somewhat with a loss to Mosman (L23-7) and a draw with UNSW (D7-7). However big wins followed against Convicts (64-5) and Blue Mountains (61-7) leading into finals, highlighted by a number of milestones in the team with club stalwarts Jamal 'Black Swan' Workman playing his 100th game for the club, Tim Martin paying his 200th game for the club, and Stuart 'Unit' Hughes and Chris Schliebs playing their 300th game for the club.

The Halligan Cup Grand Final saw us line up against Lindfield, however it wasn't to be with Lindfield too strong on the day. Nevertheless, we got another crack at finals footy with the Sutherland Cup finals in the following weeks. Our Sutherland Cup Semi Final saw us defeat Blue Mountains 29-13, leading us to a Preliminary Final against Mosman. In a cracking game, the boys fought hard despite a number of injuries seeing three backs move to the forwards (whilst still managing to win a number of scrum penalties), however ultimately went down in a tight contest 10-7.

Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable season but one that left us wondering what could have been. Congratulations to team best and fairest Nathan Ramsay and club top try scorer Darcy Atkinson (17) on standout seasons on the field, and the whole squad for standout seasons off the field doing what Halligans do best.

Bring on season 2024.





## Barbour Cup 2023 Report

The 2023 Colts will go down as the best team that didn't win a comp while spending 6 weeks in Europe.

The less said about the GF the better... but the more said about our 3 headed leadership monster that was Rutts, Fitz and Rourkie is critical.

It's hard to look back on a season full of promise that didn't deliver the final prize without getting teary eyed, but the actual genuine win for this season is that many many Colleagues were born.

We will return next year bigger better and drunker than ever... and hopefully without the great Euro Summer. We will lift into the pre season, make our third straight GF and claim Barbarella back.

Colts 24. Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose

Minu, Woodsie and Boydie\*

\*all life members





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## Convicts 2023 Report

It's that time of year when we take the opportunity to look back on our past season.

This year the AGM was led by Sydney Convicts President Ken Averre, who shared a number of the key moments that made up the year in the annual President's Report.

Here are some of the highlights from this year's President's Report and our AGM:

Looking at our year on the field we:

- Delivered a strong performance for our Firsts team in the McLean Cup reaching the preliminary finals
- Saw our Seconds team take to the field in the Halligan Cup
- Became WINNERS of the 2023 Purchas Cup in Perth
- Welcomed a large number of new players and participants through our Pathways to Rugby coaching program
- Launched the Simon Dunn Memorial Trophy

Off the field saw the Club deliver once again a full calendar of social, community and fundraising events including Rugger Buzzer, Trivia, Bunnings Sausage Sizzles, participation in Mardi Gras Fair Day and Parade, and significantly our first appearance at Parramatta Pride. Acknowledging the importance of supporting mental health, our Club Captains took the opportunity to participate in some basic mental health first aid training.

Ken shared a huge thank you to our friends, family, community and sponsors who supported us through the year, and paid tribute to Simon Dunn and Nathan John who tragically passed away this year.

The AGM was also a chance to say thanks to all those who volunteer their time to the club including coaches, team managers, photographers, as well as those stepping back from the committee including Darren Moss, Eliot Hastie and Josh O'Rourke.

Focus now turns to welcoming both old and new players as we prepare for our 2024 season and participating in the Bingham Cup in Rome.