Junior Gold Program Newsletter

October 2011 Vol. 1 Issue 5

High Performance coaches and talent scouts pay close attention to the on field performance of some of the best U15 year players in Australia.

Players at the Junior Gold U15 High Performance Camp undergo important testing lead by ARU High Performance coaches and Dean Higham from the AIS..

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U15 High Performance Camp Uncovers Tomorrow's Rugby Talent

On the same weekend that the Wallabies played their epic semi-final showdown against New Zealand at the Rugby World Cup, the ARU's High Performance Unit sought to uncover the next generation of Wallabies by conducting its annual Junior Gold U15 High Performance Camp in Sydney. The ARU invited 98 players in the U15 age group from across Australia into a 2 1/2 day camp. Many players selected for the camp had been identified through important junior club and representative pathways as well as various schoolboy competitions. Full time High Performance coaches, talent scouts and external consultants were on hand to present on and off field sessions to the group, providing an insight into the standards and expectations required to become a Rugby player at the highest level.

Whilst the players underwent important on field athletic testing, skill practice sessions and trial games; the off field education component of the camp is viewed just as important in the development of the young players. Nutrition, flexibility, injury management and performance analysis education sessions kept the players active away from the rugby field. One of the largest education sessions presented at the Junior Gold Camp is the 'Lifeskills' program, designed to enhance the young players' understanding of their personal brand and the impact a positive brand has on the individual and on the player's family, friends, team and sport. The 'Lifeskills' program creates an appreciation that a player's off field learning and growth is directly linked to their on field success.

Players will also be provided valuable learning through the Illicit Drugs in Sport Education program presentation. The ARU have partnered with the Federal Government to educate young players on the effects of illicit drugs. The Illicit Drugs in Sport Education program partners the ARU in delivering the U15 High Performance Camp providing young players with important information to make positive decisions in their life away from the rugby field.

"We brought players into the camp from Western Australia, Victoria, regional NSW, regional QLD, Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and the Northern Territory providing genuine national coverage explained national program

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U15 HP Camp - Continued

coordinator Ben Whitaker. "Our Pathway to Gold program now extends into every state and territory in Australia and we have recently seen players from South Australia and Tasmania graduate to state and national honours through various national talent development programs. The U15 High Performance Camp is the start of a long journey for these young players to become the best players and young men they can be. No doubt some will graduate over the years to become SuperRugby and even Wallaby level players - importantly all attending players will appreciate that hard work, resilience, personal development and enjoyment are significant factors in becoming the best they can be and achieving through Rugby and life".

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The camp represents an initial program within the ARU's Pathway to Gold program - a national long term talent development system to develop and select Australia's best up and coming talent for future representation at the highest level. The program, instigated after the 2003 World Cup staged in Australia has assisted in the graduation of players such as David Pocock, Will Genia, Ben McCalman, Pat McCabe, James Slipper and James O'Connor from school aged prospects to current World Cup Wallaby stars.

The 2011 Junior Gold U15 High Performance Camp supported by the Illicit Drugs in Sport Education program was conducted 14-16th October at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Sydney.

October/November Events

NSWJRU v QJRU U15/16/17s – Sydney
• Saturday 1st October 2011

Aust 'A' Schools v NZ Schools – Sydney
• Tuesday 4th October 2011

Aust Schools v NZ Schools – Sydney
• Saturday 8th October 2011

Junior Gold Program's Commence – Australia-wide
• Late October/Early November 2011

National Gold Squad programs commence – WA, VIC, NSW, QLD, ACT
• 31st October 2011

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Australian Schoolboys beat NZ in Epic Test Match

The Australian Schoolboys have claimed the Novotel Trans Tasman Trophy for the eighth time against annual rivals the New Zealand Schoolboys at Knox College in Sydney on Saturday 8th October 2011. A dominant forward display and assertive defence paved the way for a 23-16 victory in front of over 2000 spectators.

New Zealand moved to an early 6-0 lead after 15 minutes with successive penalty goals to flyhalf Simon Hickey, one from 50m before Australia got on the scoreboard through a penalty goal to Trinity College's Jack Debreczeni. An intercept try to New Zealand moved the score to 13-6 with 10 min of the first half to play. Australia managed to maintain possession in the Kiwi's 22m and captain Curtis Browning form Brisbane State High barged over from close range to have the scoreline reading 13-8 at halftime. A huge tackle just before the halftime siren from St Ignatius lock Michael Wells a highlight.

Australia began the second half well with continued scrum pressure allowing Endeavour Sports High scrumhalf Waldo Wessels to be all over his Kiwi opposition and No 8. The turnover of possession was telling with an Australian penalty goal moving the score to 13-11 before excellent lead up work from Wessels and Killarney Heights High wing Alex Northam resulted in a try to in-centre Jim Stewart from Scots College. At 16-13 the Australian knew the Kiwi's would come back strong.

Two quick penalty goals from NZ flyhalf Hickey to regain the lead 19-16 did not deter the resolute Australians, who capitalized once again on scrum pressure to send replacement flyhalf Jake McIntyre from Alstonville High over for what would be the decisive score. The 23-16 victory added to an excellent weekend for Australian teams with the Wallabies beating South Africa at the RWC the next day.

The 2011 Australian Schoolboy Team celebrates their 23-16 Novotel Trans Tasman Test victory over NZ in Sydney.

Youth 7s Captain Lewis Holland carries the Australian Team flag alongside Olympian Petria Thomas at the 2011 Commonwealth Youth Games

National Youth 7s Team Take Bronze in Europe

The Australian U18 7s team returned home in September with a bronze medal from the 2011 Commonwealth Youth Games in Isle of Man. The team, captained by national squad member Lewis Holland, went down 26-21 in the semi-final against South Africa before regrouping strongly to defeat Scotland in the bronze medal playoff.

"A couple of tough calls early in the semi-final against South Africa put us on the back foot, however the team fought back impressively to level the scores at 21-21 before the Africans scored with 20 seconds remaining" commented Head Coach Chris Lane.

"The experience for these players will put them in a great position to continue their 7s development and push for national 7s selection in the next few years leading into the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2016 Olympic Games. I would not be surprised if a couple of players from this team were representing Australia in Rio De Janeiro in 2016."

The Junior Gold Youth 7s Program is an important thread of the Pathway to Gold talent development program and will support the development of players for the highest level of 7s Rugby in the lead up to the 2016 Olympics. 7s Rugby will be used within the National Gold Squad and Junior Gold Program to identify potential players for the future and also to drive specific skill and game understanding development. 7s Rugby will continue to become a derivative of Rugby that provides playing opportunities as well as a learning platform to further drive the performance of Australia's national teams – from Schoolboys to the Wallabies.

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Queensland & the National Indigenous Teams Reclaim National U16 Titles

The 2011 National U16 Championship wrapped up at St Ignatius College, Riverview in late September with Queensland Red and the National Indigenous teams walking away winners.

After a strong showing in their earlier Division One Pool B matches Queensland Red entered day four of the Championship pitted against NSW Schools, who had also shown good form in their three Pool A matches. With the winner set to take out the Rod Macqueen Shield for 2011 the Queensland Reds started strongly and by half-time had amassed an impressive 31 point lead over NSW Schools. The second half saw NSW Schools register their first points but despite a spirited effort Schools could not regain ground on the Queensland side who eventually ran out 48-14 winners to claim the Rod Macqueen Shield and be crowned the 2011 National U16 Division One Champions. The win adds to Queensland's impressive trophy cabinet this year, which includes the State's maiden Super Rugby title, the National Women's Championship and the Novotel Australian Schools Rugby Union Championship.

One of the most anticipated games of the final day was the Division Two fixture between South Australia and the National Indigenous team to determine the winner of Division Two and the John Eales Shield. The National Indigenous team was seeking to reverse last year's result that saw South Australia claim the honours. At half-time the match was still in the balance with just 10 points separating the two sides and the National Indigenous team holding a slender 15-5 lead over the South Australians. The National Indigenous side continued to extend their lead in the second half and outscored the South Australian's 19-points to 10 to run out eventual 34-15 winners and claim their eighth Division Two title since 2001.

NSW and Victoria players compete for lineout possession during the 2011 National U16 Championships conducted by the ARU.

Division One Player of the Championships: Brad Wilkin (QLD Red)
Division Two Player of the Championships: Jamaine Crossley (National Indigenous)

Robbie Deans
Qantas Wallabies Head Coach

"The strength of our talent development program is critical to the on-going success of both the Qantas Wallabies and our other national representative teams. The nationally coordinated nature of our approach, which includes the involvement of high performance coaches at all levels and with all teams – including the Wallabies; ensures that we have an overall development process of the highest possible standard. This development pathway aims to prepare players thoroughly, in all aspects of both preparation and the game itself, and will allow our stars of the future to thrive. I would encourage all players with a desire to fulfil their potential to join our pathway to gold."

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