

the Inside Oil



the official Inside Running Newsletter

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From the Editor

It is with genuine sadness that we bring you this month's issue of the Inside Oil. A great mate of Inside Running, Matt Goodlet, passed away last week in a tragic car accident. Our thoughts go out to Mike, Anne, Cindy, Janine, Kristen and all of Brain's friends and family at this time of immense sorrow.

So what has the Inside Oil got for you this month?

- We give an update of the Super 14 and make some bold predictions about the makeup of the final four;
- We provide an outline of our relationship with heavensgame.com and what our clients can expect to see on this rugby content website; and

- We feature an article that casts aspersions on the concept of the 'Player Drain'.

Standard features each month include news and current vacancies which highlight some of the more urgent club vacancies we have available. Make sure you check them out and get in touch if any take your interest.

Cheers, — Mike Rogers, Director, Inside Running

Super 14 Update

With three rounds of pool play remaining in the Super 14 the mathematicians have their calculators out. The good oil is it will only take 38 points to finish fourth and qualify for the semi's, and 43 points to get a home semi-final. What this means is teams like the Force, Brumbies, Waratahs and Crusaders all really need to win their last 3 remaining games to qualify... Definitely a tall order.

My prediction is the top four will consist of the

Hurricanes, Sharks, Bulls and Chiefs — in that order — resulting in a total shut out for the Australian teams. It is with great trepidation that as a loyal Chiefs fan I back them for a semi given their track record of starting and finishing poorly (but playing well in between) in years gone by, but I do believe this Chiefs team is different.

There are some mouth-watering games coming up over the next 3 weeks, all of which will have a significant impact on the final wash up:

- **May 1 – Hurricanes V Blues** (Another loss for the inconsistent Blues will virtually end their season).
- **May 3 – Bulls V Force** (If the Force lose they are GONE).
- **May 9 – Chiefs V Hurricanes** (What a spectacle this promises to be, the winner will surely qualify for a home semi).
- **May 9 – Brumbies V Blues** (The loser will definitely be GONE).
- **May 10 – Sharks V Waratahs** (If the Waratahs are to shake off their bridesmaid tag they will need to win away from home against a quality Sharks outfit. Lose, and their season will basically be over).
- **May 17 – Sharks V Bulls** (Surely this game will dictate which South African team will earn the right to host a home semi-final).

Here's to hoping the Chiefs can pick up a few more points on their South African tour which will set up their final two games of the season against the Cane's and the Brumbies, both at home. If you are a Chiefs fan, now is the time to get along and support your team!! >>>



From the field:

- **Ryan Newman signs with Oxford Harlequins, 1/4/09.** Former Australian U19 player signs with English club side, Oxford Harlequins, for the 2009/10 season.
- **James Kamana signs with Tasman, 1/4/09.** Waikato and former NZ Sevens representative wing, James Kamana, signs with Tasman.
- **Dwayne Sweeney scores hat-trick, 4/4/09.** Chiefs centre-come-winger, Dwayne Sweeney, bags a hat-trick of tries against the Lions in Hamilton in what was a spirited comeback from the home side.
- **Tim Mikkelson called into full squad, 13/4/09.** Waikato and NZ Sevens winger, Tim Mikkelson, is called in to the full Chiefs squad for the tour to South Africa.
- **Richard Kahui launches blog, 24/4/09.** Inside Running Elite Management client, Richard Kahui, launches his blog at heavensgame.com.
- **Tom Chamberlain called into Blues, 28/4/09.** North Harbour and Blues wider training group member, Tom Chamberlain, is called in to the Blues full squad to prepare for the upcoming match against the Blues.

Player Drain or Leaky Tap?

The term 'player drain' evokes images of a vast culvert with an endless appetite for overseas talent — a chasm capable of gobbling up all who want to gain entry. Is this really the case? Or would the overseas player drain be better described as a small pool drip fed by a leaky tap?

There is a train of thought that European and Japanese clubs have an insatiable appetite for our rugby players — and this appetite is currently not being satisfied — and basically any player of note from New Zealand or Australia can pick up a professional deal overseas.

Well the stark reality is far from the truth. Over the past 3-4 years we have seen a dramatic decrease in spots available to foreign players. Basically, the size of the market is contracting.

This is due to four key factors:

- It's becoming more and more difficult for rugby players to get work permits to play professional rugby in the UK. This is limited to either current International players, or those with UK ancestry (in most part);
- The foreign player quotas are being reduced over time. This is happening in the majority of markets. Italy has again reduced their quota of foreigners and a market like France is in the process of a major overhaul;
- Whilst rugby is growing in emerging markets such as Spain, Portugal, Hong Kong, Germany, Russia, etc, it has not yet grown to the point where clubs in these markets can attract our professional players. In most part the market is still limited to professional clubs in the Six Nations and Japan;
- Most significantly, there are quality foreigners already taking up foreign player spots in the major markets. This is the key factor affecting demand. In days gone by a former All Black would sign a two year deal at the end of his

career and then retire with a nice nest egg. Nowadays, clubs are signing players aged 25-27, sometimes even younger, and are getting up to 8 years out of them, resulting in less turnover and equating to less demand for new players.

The by-product is clubs still want to recruit but are often restricted in terms of numbers, so rather than take 3 Super 14 players, they make a play to secure a leading All Black, for example. This is what we saw after the 2007 Rugby World Cup and this trend is likely to continue. So whilst the market in terms of numbers is contracting, the type of money available to leading players continues to increase.

What this all means is leading All Blacks will continue to be in massive demand. Players below that standard will need to work hard to obtain interest from overseas and will need to be strategic in terms of timing, location, etc, in order to pick up a deal. Picking up a deal will not be a foregone conclusion.

Which leads me to my last point. Whilst we have a leaky tap in terms of a poor professional competition which alienates our domestic competition, starts too early, doesn't go for long enough, covers four time zones, has periods of up to 6 weeks with teams not playing at home, has onerous travel commitments and is struggling for audiences, we will continue to drip feed our very best into the overseas player pool.

The overseas player drain is not what it seems, but unless we fix the tap, the leak may get worse. >>>

Current Vacancies:

- 1. North Div 1 Club (Eng)** Seek 8 & Centre. Suit players with NPC B exp. or Sydney 1st Grade exp. Flights, accom, job assistance & 75GBP match fee.
- 2. Scottish premier 2 Club** Seek 8 & 10. Suit players with NPC B exp or Sydney 1st Grade exp. Flights, accom, job assistance & up to 200GBP match fee.
- 3. North Div 1 Club (Eng)** Seek Player-Coach, preferably number 8. Flights, accom allowance, job & coaching fee of up to 250GBP /week.
- 4. Scottish Level 5 Club** Seek Prop/Hooker. Package of flights, accom & job assistance.
- 5. London 2 Club (Eng)** Seek big 8, Player-Coach (forwards) & Prop. Package of flights, match fee/win bonus, etc. Retainer for the player-coach position. Club also has position available at local school for teacher to run the school's rugby programme.
- 6. London 2 Club (Eng)** Seek Player-Coach. Package of up to 8,000GBP available. Prefer UK-based candidates.
- 7. Irish Level 6 Club** Seek Player-Coach (forwards). Prefer candidates with EU passport. Flights, accom, job & small coaching fee.
- 8. Scottish Level 4 Club** Seek Player-Coach. Flights, accom, job & coaching fee available.

Heavensgame.com

Inside Running have recently formed a relationship with international rugby content website, heavensgame.com. Heavensgame.com is unique because it covers rugby from all levels and all corners of the globe. The coverage of professional and international rugby is excellent, and furthermore, the website covers amateur rugby from basically anywhere the game is played.

Our input to heavensgame.com will be in a number of areas:

- On 1 May we'll be launching our vacancies page on the site. This will outline all our current vacancies with client clubs internationally and will enable players to apply for positions online;

- Richard Kahui will post a regular blog on the site, go in and check it out;
- Liam Messam will post a regular video blog on the site, the first due in May some time;
- We are seeking players and coaches, of any level, who are currently playing or coaching overseas to write articles on their experiences to contribute to heavensgame.com;
- We will contribute regularly to the site regarding the industry we work in, some of the misconceptions out there, the state of the market, etc.

If you are interested in contributing to heavensgame.com or have any discussion topics that you would like us or our clients to raise in their blogs then please let us know.