



Convicts Induction Pack

Some History:

The Convicts Rugby Club was founded at the end of 2003 with the aim of competing in the London 2004 Bingham¹ Cup, an international gay Rugby tournament. Players were recruited from the gay touch football team, POOFTA, some current and past rugby players, plus some beginners. The inspiration and driving force behind the club came from Andrew [Fuzz] Purchas, who had competed in the San Francisco Bingham Cup, held in 2002, while resident there.

From the Convicts early days, Colleagues Rugby Football Club provided critical support, welcoming the Convicts as a club within a club. The first Convicts team had trials with Colleagues in the pre-season of 2004, and had its first competition game against Campbelltown in the Halligan Cup, coming away with a first-up win.

Off the field, the Convicts commenced fundraising, initiating the Rugger Buggers and Trivia Nights that were to grow so popular with the community. Combined with the support of sponsors and donors, the Convicts were able to raise sufficient funds for the London campaign.

With confidence, the club quickly grew to a squad of 27 players including the Captain-Coach, Charlie Winn, supporters and a physio that made it to London. As the dark horse of the competition, the unseeded Convicts were drawn in the pool games against the local favourites, the 2nd seed London Kings Cross Steelers in the first game of the tournament. In a hard game that took its toll on both sides, the Convicts came away with a memorable win, going on to finish first in their pool. Coming from behind, the Convicts beat 3rd seed Los Angeles in the elimination quarterfinals, but met their nemesis the 1st seed San Francisco Fog in the semi-finals, to be beaten 3 to 6. Fog went on to win comfortably against Manchester in the final.

Back home, with reduced numbers post-Bingham, the Convicts merged with another Colleagues team to take out the Halligan Cup and a renewed determination to win at the New York Bingham of 2006.

Leading up to the 2006 New York campaign was a period of growth and consolidation. The Convicts were undefeated in winning the Halligan Cup in 2005, the first time a gay rugby club had won their competition. In 2006, with two regular teams playing, the Convicts were able to bridge two conflicting goals: how to provide a football standard that would attract and keep experienced players; while still being able to welcome beginners and social players.

The Convicts went on to win the New York Bingham Cup in 2006, beating the San Francisco Fog in the final. Expect to see a movie about it in 2008. In New York, the Convicts second team won the Bingham Plate, to round out the tournament.

2008 Goals:

The next Bingham tournament will be held in Dublin, June 2008. The Convicts aim to defend their titles and perhaps field a third team in the third competition. There is much work to do, on the field and off to make this a reality. There will be an early focus on training and games, plus a great deal of fundraising. The aim is to ensure that no committed Convict misses Bingham, due to finances. With the Convicts having around 70+ players in the travelling squad, this challenge gets bigger with every Bingham.

¹ The Bingham Cup is named after Mark Bingham, who was instrumental in establishing gay rugby in the USA. Mark was one of the passenger heroes who resisted the terrorists on board Flight 901, during the 11th September 2001 attacks. The flight crashed in Philadelphia, short of its intended Washington target, killing all on board.



General calendar:

Summer training - fitness & basic techniques, from late Nov to pre-season training.

Pre-season training - fitness, basics and basic combinations and position play. Normally early Feb to March, but can start earlier on a Bingham year (Mid/late Jan 2008).

Trial Games – March

Games - from April, through to August, with finals held in October.

Bingham Cup is usually in the late May to late June period, on even years. (Dublin is mid June 2008)

Annual awards - At the end of each season (around October), the Convicts have an awards night. A variety of awards are presented, from Best & Fairest, through to some novelty awards. A great night for all.

AGM - held in November. Time to get involved.

Colleagues:

More formally, Woollahra Colleagues Rugby Football Club is the Convicts host club. Founded in the early 1930s, the Colleagues aim to support players of all skill levels, at the highest standard of competition and a social & professional network un-equalled in the NSW Suburban Rugby Union. (Check out: <http://www.colleaguesrugby.com.au/>) Much of the success of the Convicts comes from the support provided by Colleagues.

Community support.

The Convicts enjoy a diverse range of community support including sponsorship by The Midnight Shift and ACON and have forged alliances with Outsports and media outlets. We repay this support by holding social functions at the relevant venues and assisting supporters in their activities. Our “brand” is well recognised, strong and respected.

Health & Safety

Rugby is a contact sport. Whilst the chance of serious injury is relatively low injuries can, and do occur. While most injuries are minor, there are the occasional breaks or sprains that require medical treatment. The following notes are important for your wellbeing:

It is essential you are registered with the Australian Rugby Union before you play any games. The ARU provides limited insurance coverage for life debilitating injuries. (A simple broken leg doesn't count!) Make sure you have completed a registration form before you take to the field. See your coach or team manager. To note, each year, the ARU gets stricter, and clubs/coaches can get into all sorts of grief if we don't conform. Since it's for your benefit, please assist.

Get private medical insurance. This is essential and make sure you read the fine print.

Get a mouth guard. This is essential. You will even need a mouthguard for training. Best to get a properly fitted guard from your dentist. If you have private health insurance, they will refund a significant part of the cost. The Convicts have a dentist² who will fit you out with a custom-built mouth guard for a discount.

If you are a beginner, do not expect to play until you are capable of safeguarding yourself, your teammates and the opposition. The coaches will make this call.

² Dentist: Dr Ryan Nevin, Suite 1, Level 10, 229 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Phone: 9232 2814. Mention "Convicts Mouth Guard".



If you have a tendency to sprain ankles, etc, then get this strapped before the game. Where we can, we will have a physio in attendance. If not, get either the team manager or one of the more experienced players to help you.

When you do need the services of a physio, we recommend Darlinghurst Physio³.

Gear

Boots

You will need a pair of Rugby boots. These come in all shapes and styles and are available from sporting goods stores. There is a great variation in price from around \$100.00 upwards. Screw in studs are preferable for forwards. Backs can choose the molded variety if they prefer (but when playing in Europe/Ireland, screw in studs are highly recommended due to the heavier grounds). Forwards usually prefer slightly heavier boots with 8 studs and a high cut boot to protect your ankles. Backs usually low cut boots with 6 studs.

Jerseys

Playing jerseys are supplied by the club before each match. If you participate in a tour then you are likely to get a tour jersey. Historically, these have been paid for by the club out of our fundraising activities.

Socks & shorts

Supplied by the club

Tshirts

Available for around \$25 for players (\$35 for non-players) and are handy for fundraising and social functions.

Who's Who and What's What?

Colleagues - our host club. Check out <http://www.colleaguesrugby.com.au/>

IGRAB - the International Gay Rugby Association & Board, who coordinate the Bingham Cup. See <http://www.igrab.net/>

Convicts Committee - the elected management team of the Convicts.

Convicts Contacts – see the website for details on who to contact.

Subbies - NSW Suburban Rugby Union who manage the local Rugby competitions. See <http://www.rugby.net.au/> to stay up to date on scores, the competition ladder, etc.

Yahoo groups - There are two. The Sydney Convicts group is for players and The Sydney Convicts Supporters group is, as the name suggests, for supporters.

Convicts Subscription (Subs) – All players are required to pay an annual club subscription of approximately \$150.00. This covers items including socks, shorts, ground and referee hire.

³ Darlinghurst Physiotherapy. Level 1, 66 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst. Phone 93260314 or 93317228. Ask for Sabrina, Simon or Phil and mention Convicts.



Fundraising – The Convicts hold a number of fundraising initiatives throughout the year including the infamous Rugger Bigger striptease, trivia nights and various raffles. We encourage all players to take part as the more we raise the more we help you.

ARU Registration

All players must complete a registration form before playing their first competition game, this will provide limited medical insurance (only for major injuries so still highly recommend you own medical insurance). Download one from the Convicts website (under news) or at http://www.sydneyconvicts.org/2007_ARU_Membership_Form.pdf. Once you've filled this in please give it to the Club Secretary John Williams or any committee member.

Communication

The Convicts communicate with their members through both their public website at www.sydneyconvicts.org and through email. Please make sure you join the Yahoo group (Sydney Convicts) by sending an email to sydneyconvicts-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with who you are etc, though this does not automatically sign you up. You will need to be approved which may take a couple of days. If you have problems, send an email to recruitment@sydneyconvicts.org.

Media

Photography/Privacy/etc: The Convicts are media hogs and must be the most photographed team in the Subbies. This is essential for our fundraising activities. If you're shy about being photographed and splashed onto the front pages of the Sydney Morning Herald, just let the Team Managers know your sensitivities.

Social events

The Convicts hold numerous social events throughout the year including a annual pub crawl and watching Rugby games.

Constitution

The Convicts has a constitution that set out the governance of the club. This is available on the website.

Code of Conduct

The Convicts have a code of conduct that outlines the behaviours that are expected of club members. This is available on the website.

Bingham Selection Policy

The Bingham Competition selection policy details how players qualify for The Convict's Bingham Cup teams.