

# Keeping an eye on the ball

If you are going to dream, dream big says St Andrew's new High Performance Rugby Manager, Rod McIntosh. But while a covered, astroturf field may be some way off, the professional rugby coach believes StAC has a solid rugby playing future ahead of it.

"There is a lot of very good foundation work already in place (thanks to Ray Southam, the College's previous Rugby Development Co-ordinator and Mike Johnston, Rugby Co-ordinator) and now it's time to take things to the next level," he says.

Rod joins the College from Hong Kong where he was Director of Sport and Head of Physical Education at the French International School. He says his immediate goal at St Andrew's is to streamline the rugby development pathway so it runs effectively from Preparatory School through to the First XV. "If a well-structured development programme is put in place with strong protocols that embrace a professional common approach, then athletes consolidate skills as they move up and progress through the system," says Rod. This is achieved by introducing generic commonalities and general themes across the teams in order to help improve performance.

Rod has played and coached professional rugby, including earning 75 caps playing for Waikato. He



Rod McIntosh

represented New Zealand Secondary Schools, New Zealand Under 21, the New Zealand Māori All Blacks and was an All Black trialist in 1989 and 1990. He continued to play rugby professionally overseas in Europe and South Africa then moved to Asia making the Hong Kong National 7s and 15s rugby team from 1994-2004. In 2009-2010 he received the Hong Kong Coaching Excellence Award from the National Sports Foundation.

He has also coached schoolboy through to senior level winning a number of school championship and senior premierships in New Zealand, Ireland and Hong Kong. Rod also sat on the Board of Directors at the HKRFU as the Director of Coaching and oversaw the delivery of coaching programmes and coach education throughout all levels of the game. Most recently he has been involved with the Waikato Chiefs Super Rugby Camp.

Rod's drawn on a skilled local network to set up an experienced rugby steering committee comprising All Blacks Defence Coach Aussie McLean, Martin Oxley - Rugby Club President, Ray Southam - former Canterbury and Ireland coach, and Tracey Paterson, a Sport Performance Manager at High Performance Sport New Zealand, to help forge a new strategic direction for rugby at the College. He is also developing links with the CRFU in order to access benchmarking and resources.

He says a big focus will be on coaching alignment and collaboration in order to identify and revamp generic skill sets. Coaches have been drawn in from the community and include former All Black and Crusader Nathan Mauger, who is now the Canterbury U19 coach, Canterbury Women's ITM coaches Kim Brown and John Sherratt, and a mix of Old Collegians and young aspiring coaches. "We've got to work smarter with the resources we have," he says. "The aim is to work collectively so within three to five years we create one of the most professional school

rugby environments in the South Island. This aspiration is in line with the overall strategic vision of being the most respected co-educational rugby college in the country."

And he's not waiting around for it to happen either. The students came back from holidays straight into fitness testing. This was followed by a six week foundation work block that focused on strength and aerobic conditioning. Each student will also be resourced with a personal training programme to work on over the summer holidays and then at the start of next year it's back into a fitness re-test and a comprehensive eight week pre-season preparation block to set the foundations for the next rugby season.

