## **United States Australian Football League**



2001 Annual Report



# 2001 Annual Report

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"The Atlantic Alliance cup was proof off how far we have come in just 4 years."

Paul O'Keeffe Founding President

Photo here



# **2000 Presidents Report**

The year 2000 has seen the USAFL grow in so many ways, it's hard to summarize in one document. Following our milestone of reaching 200 games played at the ANZAC Cup back in April, we recently flew past the 300 game milestone. By the end of this years National Tournament, we will have played 175 games this year alone, proving Aussie Rules is here to stay in the US.

Personally, to have been involved with the league since the beginning and to see it grow so quickly fills me with an awesome sense of pride. To name people specifically to thank would be unfair to the hundreds of people who work tirelessly to further grow our great sport. Let me just say to the outgoing and incoming National Board, thanks for all the hard work. Also, to each and every player, coach, supporter and member of the USAFL, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the, often thankless, work you do, just know that I appreciate every minute that you take out of your heavy schedule to devote to Aussie Rules.

I'd also like to remind everyone why we're all here...

"For The Good of the Game...."

### **Richard Mann**

President December, 2001



# League Stabilizes in 2000

One of the main aims for the National Board this year was not so much to add as many teams as we could, but more to stabilize and develop the existing clubs. From January 1, 2000 to the same date in 2001, practically every team will have moved up a Grade (Grades A, B and C). Phoenix in Arizona has been the shooting star, coming from nonexistence, to playing the entire CAFL season and having a four team Metropolitan League, commencing after the Nationals. The Phoenix League is utilizing usfooty 9's for their city league, an adaptation of Aussie Rules for reduced player numbers and field size. The regional leagues continue to develop and form. With the CAFL and MAAFL continuing to grow, we now see the addition of the AZAFL in Phoenix and the SEAFL in the South East. It is critical to the development of footy in the US for these leagues to continue to prosper. It allows teams to not only play on a regular basis, but also within a reasonable traveling distance from their home, which continues to be a big obstacle for some teams.



# Junior & Senior Revolution Teams

One of the highlights for this year was the trip of our Juniors team, spearheaded by Jeff Norris from Chicago, to Canberra for the Jim Stynes Cup. Despite playing two games shortly after arriving, our kids came within a kick of making the Grand Final and made a lot of people sit up and take notice of them. Paul Roos, the ex AFL veteran who coached our senior side in 1999, flew down to Canberra from his home in Sydney and coached our kids, adding professionalism and a higher profile to our team. Our junior team was also outfitted in their brand new uniforms, proudly sponsored by Burley Sekem. The Juniors programs across the USA continue to develop, with 76 schools currently participating in some form. The merchandising and selling of the AusKicks from Australia (called usfooty kick in the US), continues to increase, with 200 kits sold to date. These kits get the kids a ball, a cap and a magazine focusing on Aussie Rules.

To add to our National Junior teams' success, our Senior team was again triumphant over Canada in the Second Annual International Match. The National team, playing under the new eligibility rules of only allowing US citizens to play, played a tough, disciplined game of wet weather footy to run out comfortable winners. The program for our National Team for the next two years has everyone very excited. After playing Canada

again in 2001, we will journey to England to participate in a European Tournament. This will be followed up in 2002 by our trip to Melbourne, Australia for the first International Cup. To add to this heavy program, we will be sending our best player to Melbourne on a two week scholarship program. The recipient will live with a player from Essendon, the reigning AFL Premiers, and will train under legendary coach Kevin Sheedy. These programs will highlight to everyone, particularly those watching in Australia, how far we have progressed and how quickly we are moving forward to the recruitment of the first American player from our League to play in the AFL.



# **Umpire Development**

An area which has been closely examined over the past few years is that of umpire recruitment and development. Following the inaugural clinic in 1999, we conducted two clinics in 2000 and will more than likely progress to three regional clinics in 2001, with the AFL represented at two of them. AFL umpire Mark McKenzie attended this years Nationals, following on from Hayden Kennedy's successful trip in 1999.



### **AFL Support**

None of the above endeavors could have been so successful without the support of the AFL, the professional league's governing body in Australia. Dr. Ross Smith, Head of Game Development, has been the spearhead of this initiative to move Aussie Rules in the US to the next level. Wayne Jackson, CEO, and everyone else at the AFL continue to assist us to develop all areas of the sport. With an increase in funding of nearly 300% in 2000 compared with 1999, the AFL has proven it is dedicated to supporting the USAFL in the long term.



# **Sponsorship Grows**

One area that the USAFL Board has been working hard to develop is that of sponsors. I am proud to say we have secured two multi-year deals with two prestigious Australian Companies in 2000. Burley Sekem, a football and sporting apparel manufacturer out of Western Australia, bring not only the capacity to manufacture our National uniforms and club jersey's, but also footballs, including the uniquely imprinted balls they made up for the International Game and the National Tournament. The USAFL have also secured a discount for all teams and will also be receiving Match Balls to distribute to the clubs for immediate use. More recently, we have completed a multi year agreement with Coopers Brewery from South Australia. Glenn Cooper and everyone at Coopers are very excited at the prospect of working with us over the coming years. Coopers is not only the naming sponsor for the National Tournament, but will also be the League's major sponsor for 2001 and the following years. The combining of two energetic and expanding organizations in the USA was a perfect fit.

The National Tournament continues to be the highlight of the USAFL Footy Calendar. The number of teams continues to expand, with 16 teams from over 20 cities attending in 2000. The Tournament was relocated from Cincinnati for the first time in 2000, being held in LA this year. With the rotation of the venue now commencing, all the regional clubs are getting the opportunity to attend a National Tournament in their area and show off their organization to visiting clubs.







# 2000 Junior Development Report

The development of the juniors' game of Australian Football in the US is crucial to the continued success of our league. 2000 was a year of transition for the USFooty juniors program. Initially began by Chicago area school teacher Jeff Norris, the program has grown from one city and a few schools, to several cities and many schools, both public and private.

When Jeff Norris resigned his position as director of junior development in March 2000, I was flattered to be offered the position. Following Jeff's lead, I will continue to strive towards the growth of the game at the junior level. One of Jeff's final duties was to take the USA's junior National team to Australia in August for the Jim Stynes Cup, an international junior football competition. In our first ever appearance in such a competition, the Americans fared quite well, falling only one goal short of the Grand Final.

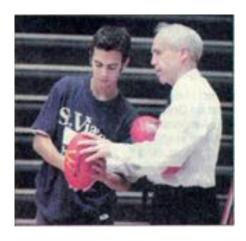




# 2000 Junior Development Report

Requesting the assistance of all USAFL clubs to implement their own juniors program in their areas has been one of the juniors' programs main tasks. For the season 2001, it is hoped that all USAFL clubs will hold a juniors' clinic to introduce footy to local children, either at a school or recreation center. As of the AGM, juniors programs have been implemented in Chicago, Denver, and the San Francisco Bay area. Already in the works for 2001 are Dallas and Phoenix.

The USAFL was honored to host Dr. Ross Smith (pictured at right while visiting St. Viator High School in Chicago), director of game development for the AFL to not only the National tournament in Los Angeles, but also in Chicago and Denver to see what's been happening with our juniors programs. Dr. Smith commented on the excellent skills of the children in these programs. While in Denver, Dr. Smith also visited with the Colorado Avalanche(NHL) and



Denver Nuggets(NBA) to tour their facilities and discuss the community outreach and juniors programs these 2 teams provide the Denver metro area.

2000 was a year of transition for the juniors programs in the USAFL. With support and guidance from the AFL and the added input and help of the USAFL's member clubs, it is with great optimism we look towards 2001.

#### Jim Baldwin

Junior Development



# **2000 Webmaster Report**

A new look usfooty.com website was launched in November of 1999. The site has continually evolved with new features being added on a regular basis in an effort to better inform people about Australian Rules Football in the United States.

The new database driven Game Results & News sections allow for more timely postings, thus keeping viewers better informed of recent happenings within the sport. Development of online form submissions have made a number of paper-based processes more streamlined, including Player Registration, Telegroup Registration and Club Results Submission.

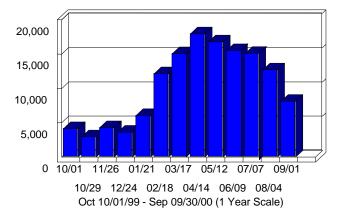
An online footy tipping competition was run from usfooty.com for the 2000 AFL Season, from March through to August with over 2600 entrants taking part. The competition was a huge success and a great way of getting people to return to the website on a regular basis.

#### **Matt Muller**

Webmaster

#### User Sessions

### **User Sessions by Date**





## **2000 Website Statistics**

Website Statistics		
Timeframe	October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1999 – September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2000	
Number of Hits for Home Page	51,456	
Number of Successful Hits for Entire Site	2,568,141	
Number of Page Views (Impressions)	624,506	
Number of User Sessions	136,400	
Average Number of Hits Per Day	7,017	
Average Number of Page Views Per Day	1,706	
Average Number of User Sessions Per Day	373	
Average User Session Length	00:08:06	
Number of Unique Users	23,315	
Number of Users Who Visited Once	18,018	
Number of Users Who Visited More Than Once	5,297	
General Statistics		
Players Registered on website (July-Oct)	728	
Tipping Competition Entrants	2651	
Usfooty.com web mailing listees	190	
Junior USFootyKick Packs sold from website	22	







# 2000 Coopers National Championships

On October 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, sixteen USAFL teams joined together for the 2000 Coopers National

Championships at Little Lake Park in Santa Fe Springs, California. Thirty-seven games were played throughout the weekend. This year teams were divided into four pools, and the pool winners advanced to the final rounds.

Boston, Denver, San Diego and Santa Cruz advanced to the semi-finals. Denver claimed victory over Santa Cruz 7-2(44) to 4-2(26), and



San Diego defeated two-time defending National Champions, Boston 7-8(50) to 4-3(27). In the Grand Final on Sunday, the San Diego Lions and the Denver Bulldogs went head to head in their sixth 40-minute game in two days. Denver eked out a win of 3-4 (22) to 3-2 (20) over San Diego. "It was a tough grind," commented Richard Mann, Bulldog player and President of the USAFL. "Basically it was a question of whoever had their nose in front at the end of the game. There had to be a winner and a loser."

San Diego's Mike Gardiner noted that the whole weekend felt like a grueling marathon. "The rhythm of the weekend was warm-up, play, cool-down and then repeat it again. It was a tremendously intense test of mental discipline." In addition to the competition, the weekend left another impression with Mike. "When I got to the park to help set up, a bunch of guys were playing footy. I realized then how strange that was – any game that I had seen before, I had been playing in. I had never happened upon a game already going on. To me, that moment symbolized the growth of the game."



## **Denver Victorious**

Visitors from the Australian Football League, Dr. Ross Smith and Mark McKenzie, saw USfooty at its finest. "I felt as though I was in Perth or Melbourne as I was surrounded by Bombers, Cats and Bulldogs. The sister club arrangements made me feel at home," remarked Dr. Ross Smith, AFL's General Manager of Game Development. "I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the players and the way in which the tournament was conducted. Given the league's short time in existence, the quality of the play was better than I had anticipated." Dr. Ross Smith credited the sport's growth and rapid expansion to the officials and founders of the USAFL. "O'Keeffe and Mann together with the executive members have done a terrific job. For the clubs to continue to grow, and to meet the 2001 rule of only 50% Aussies on the team rosters, clubs need to really focus on developing juniors."

Mark McKenzie made the journey from Australia to help ump some of the championship games. "The dedication to the game really struck me. I was surprised by the number of sides that flew in from all over the U.S. to compete." In addition to umpping the Grand Final and about ten other games, Mark spent time working on and off the field with the USAFL umpires. A clinic was held on the Friday before the games where Mark addressed specific questions regarding control of the field and repoire with players. He also gave pointers on positioning and bouncing. As a professional umpire for the AFL, Mark has umpped major competitions in Australia, including the AFL preliminary final between Essendon and Carlton which drew a crowd of 85,000 fans.

Matt Dainauski, who is President of the Denver Bulldogs, commented on the strength of teams around the country. "As teams continue to build, we will see that power will not stay in one spot; it will balance out and move as teams get stronger. We probably won't see a dynasty in one area. Championship wins will travel throughout USAFL clubs."



## **Photo of the Season**

All the teams that attended the 2000 USAFL Coopers National Championships, in Santa Fe Springs, California, October 13 - 15, 2000



#### Pool A

Missouri Blues Nashville Kangaroos Orange County Bombers Santa Cruz Roos

#### **Pool C**

Atlanta Kookaburras Baltimore Washington Denver Bulldogs Phoenix Scorpions

#### Pool B

Boston Demons
Inland Empire Eagles
LeHigh Valley/Milwaukee Bombers
Seattle Cats

#### Pool D

Chicago Swans Cincinnati Dockers New York Magpies San Diego Lions



## **American Revolution**

The American Revolution brought home a 25-point victory over the Canadians after a very wet competition at Centennial Park in Toronto. Played on July 30, 2000, Coach Gary Hill lead the team to a win of 4-17 (41) to 2-4 (16). Hill was impressed with the level of play, despite the weather. "The players' skills and conditioning levels were outstanding. I had to remind myself that they were U.S. citizens and not Australians on the field."

Upon delivery of their uniforms one hour before game time, which the airline had apparently misplaced, the Revolution players took to the field. The team was co-captained by Ron Miller from Chicago and Deron Lien from Inland Empire.

After a tight first quarter, the Revolution gained momentum and retained the lead throughout the game. Matt Dainauski kicked three goals and Donnie Lucero added another one for the game total of four. Kyle Weir, half-forward, received the umpire's award for U.S. Best on Ground, and Charley Ellis earned the Coaches' Award for his excellent on-ball effort.

#### **Qualifying for American Revolution 2000**

The USAFL changed the qualification process for selecting Revolution players this year. In 1999, U.S. citizens and permanent residents were eligible; however, the USAFL determined that only U.S. citizens were eligible for play in the year 2000 match against Canada. With this modification, all future American Revolution team players will be citizens of the U.S.

In addition, ten selectors throughout the country determined who would play on this year's Revolution team. During the year, they traveled to different cities so they could watch players in action. Last year, individual teams selected their own players for the Revolution. Coach Hill pointed out the benefits of the new selection procedure. "Using selectors resulted in a more competitive open selection. The end result was a well-balanced team with a good spread from across the country most teams that nominated got at least one player in the final 25. Denver had the most with five players, which in hindsight makes sense as they ended up winning the national championship later in the year."



# Revolution Names New Coach

An Australian native, Gary Hill now plays for the Milwaukee Bombers. He grew up playing and coaching in Australian country leagues. Gary has a unique international playing experience: While in Antarctica working on an experiment for the University of Wisconsin – Madison, he pulled out a football and organized a small game of 3 on 3 with his colleagues who had never played before. "We used the South Pole (yes, the actual pole) as one of the goal posts." Although the game was a bit of a free for all, Gary's "expansion team" was most likely the first to play at the South Pole.

#### **The Canadian Team**

The Canadian Australian Football Association (CAFA) drew players from six teams in the greater Toronto area to compete against the Revolution. Bruce Parker, President of the CAFA, commented on the development of footy in Canada. "The Association began prior to the times of Internet. Now, we are beginning to realize the benefits of the Internet, and we're experiencing a second growth spurt. We anticipate expanding teams east and west of Toronto with this renewed interest." Established in 1989, the CAFA has had several opportunities to participate in international competitions, including matches against England and Australia. The Canadian team will be one of the competitors the Revolution will face in the Atlantic Alliance Cup, which will be held in 2001. Denmark, Great Britain and Ireland round out the five teams that will compete.

In addition to the Atlantic Alliance Cup, the American Revolution will be competing internationally in the first ever International Cup in Melbourne, which will take place in 2002. As the league becomes more active in international competition, it has become essential to have a true American League with U.S. born players. International leagues are often perceived to be ex-pat Aussies having a kick of the footy in another country. The USAFL's strength shows through with the awesome players that have joined the game after growing up with another football. What was the name of that game again? Never mind, Aussie rules.



## **American Revolution**

**Host City: Toronto, Canada** 

Date: July 30th, 2000

USA 1.4 4.7 4.10 4.17 41 CAN 1.2 1.2 2.2 2.4 16

**Best on Ground:** Kyle Weir (USA) **Coaches Awards:** Charlie Ellis (USA)



Cirsten Paine

"To represent your country...it is a very special moment"

Ron Miller Chicago Swans American Revolution Co-Captain



# Introducing the American Revolution

**Baltimore- Washington** Jay Hunter

**Boston** Jon Bacon

Chicago Ron Miller Shawn Danhouser

**Cincinnati** Kyle Strenski

**Denver** Tom Ellis Charlie Ellis

Matt Dainauski Jim Baldwin

Kyle Weir

**Detroit** Rob Beyersdorf

**Inland Empire** Deron Lien Marty Curry

Chris Olson

**LeHigh Valley** Josh Loring Dustin Jones

Jon Loring

Milwaukee Jason Becker Justin Todd

Nashville Lance Van Putten

North Carolina Drew King

Orange County David Thurmond Zach Holway

Donnie Lucero

**Seattle** Brian Perkins

**Coaching Staff:** 

**Head Coach** Gary Hill (Milwaukee)

**Assistant Coach** Cameron Ashe (Baltimore-Washington)

Assistant Coach
Runner/Trainer
Richard Mann (Denver)
Paul O'Keeffe (Milwaukee)



## **Treasurers Report**

The 2000 season proved to be a watershed year for the USAFL. Following the successful negotiation of the affiliation agreement between the USAFL and the AFL, we finally received our grant revenue of AUD\$125,000 in November of 2000. This has enabled the USAFL to repay much of the expenses owed to various board members who have kept the League running financially during the year. We have had to operate frugally since the beginning of the year, as until November, our cash availability was limited to the savings from prior years' grant monies and other operating revenue such as Club dues and minor merchandise sales. My thanks go to those Board members who kept us financially operational out of their own pockets, to the tune of over US\$20,000.

The number and sophistication of programs the League offers has grown in the last year. We expect further development of e-commerce activity, grant submissions and sponsorship funding, along with more complex National Tournament arrangements, all of which will result in exciting revenue sharing opportunities for clubs. This is possible because of the generous time commitments of volunteers, as well as the increased level of funding available. However, with increased funding and programs comes increased fiscal responsibility. Those responsible for administering these programs must be fully aware of their financial impact. We are endeavoring to make our internal systems more robust. We are implementing small business accounting systems that will enable us to keep track of inventory, generate invoices and produce a complete balance sheet. In addition, we are in the process of documenting all finance related procedures so that the relevant personnel are aware of their responsibilities and have somewhere to turn in order to ensure financial transactions are recorded correctly. This will also assist the Board with corporate governance and transition issues, should the composition of the Board change at any time. In addition, in fiscal 2001, more emphasis will be placed on planning and adherence to budgets. To this end, it is vitally important to set realistic budgets for programs and to ensure that those budgets are communicated effectively to and signed off by those responsible for them. Budget "blowouts" cannot be tolerated under any circumstances, as this will impinge on the Board's ability to execute its strategy. All of these initiatives require constant communication and this has also improved markedly in the last year.

Turning to the financial statements (stated in US Dollars), the key revenue items to note are the increased activities in the areas of sponsorship and grant income. In the expense items, activities related to club, junior and umpire development, as well as public relations have all increased, which has resulted in significantly more expenditure in these areas. Since these are closest to the AFL's heart, and our grant is directly related to our success in these programs, this is entirely logical. It is also important to note that while merchandise expenditure has increased, some merchandise is still on hand and will result in future revenue to the League. Currently, merchandise is expensed as it is purchased. We anticipate keeping physical inventory records by the end of the 2001 fiscal year and properly matching revenues with merchandise expenditure when merchandise is sold. Also important is that fact that the 2000 National Tournament cost the USAFL over US\$6,000 (net) to run. Without the great work of Mike Gardiner, Rich Mann and Paul O'Keeffe in



## **Treasurers Report**

securing the Coopers sponsorship deal, and Sheri Archer's fantastic organizational skills, this would have been more of a cash drain on the League. In 2001, I will be assisting the organizers of the Tournament to budget and account for all expenses and revenue in a timely and effective manner to ensure that the National Tournament produces a satisfactory result for the host Club and the League, financially, and in terms of the time commitment required by fellow Board members.

From a cash standpoint, the League is in a relatively healthy position as of the date of this report. However, much of our cash is in an Australian bank account and the current slide in the Australian dollar has negatively impacted us. Through the end of fiscal 2000, the USAFL recorded a foreign exchange gain in the order of US\$1,800, but more than 10% has been wiped off the value of the Australian dollar since then. This has had a negative impact of approximately US\$5,000 on the amount of cash available to us. We are monitoring the situation and will repatriate the cash to the US when exchange rates improve or when cash requirements demand it. The upside is that purchases of Australian merchandise are now cheaper and our outstanding relationship with Burley will assist us in this regard, because we can purchase product from them and pay from the Australian account, minimizing exchange losses and transaction fees. My thanks go to ex-USAFL Secretary Paul Whiting for assisting us with administering the Australian account. Finally, we have earmarked 10% of our current and future funding to be used to increase the clubs' equity in the League. This year, approximately US\$10,000 will be set aside from the cash we have on hand to provide a pool of funds that can be used, should the need arise, as a basis for significant growth initiatives. I believe it is in the best interest of the clubs for the League to improve its equity base, and this is indicative of the Board's commitment to the stewardship of the Sport.

The Treasurer's responsibility does not end at signing checks and collecting subs. I applaud those Board members who have embraced the Treasurer's role as truly consultative, rather than one of merely "keeping score". The strategic direction of the USAFL is inextricably linked to its financial direction and I hope that future Board members keep this at the front of their minds. I strongly recommend that should the position of Treasurer ever become vacant, the Board ensure that anyone standing for election to the portfolio has a strong accounting and business background, is prepared to provide input into the Board's direction and will stand up for the good of the League, the good of the clubs and therefore by definition, the good of the game.

Good luck in 2001.

Cameron A. Murray USAFL Treasurer



# **USAFL Income Statement**

(1/1/2000 to 12/31/2000 - on a Cash Basis)

#### **INCOME**

USFootyKick	\$1,214.00
AFL grant income	66,575.00
Commission	1,370.11
Foreign exchange gain	1,881.49
Interest Income	62.80
Revolution merchandise	1,915.00
Sponsorship income	11,224.35
Advertising	750.00
Club dues	6,600.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$91,592.75

#### **EXPENSES**

David Characa	122 71
Bank Charges	133.71
Conference Call	2,249.79
Insurance	1,700.00
Legal fees and consulting	3,750.00
Club development	2,657.04
Junior development	2,774.70
Printing & stationery	792.50
Public relations	7,741.33
Medical supplies	45.64
National game	4,042.02
Net national tourn. Expenses	6,470.88
Merchandise	7,259.06
Reimbursement	542.40
Website	1,399.54
Telegroup dividends	330.50
Telephone	359.19
Trademark registration	410.00
Umpire development	3,263.92
Administrative/office supplies	870.51
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	6,792.73

NET SURPLUS **\$44,800.02** 

#### **Reconciliation of Net Income to Cash on Hand**

Cash as of 12/31/99	\$13,812.90
Add: YTD Net income/(loss)	\$44,800.02
Cash as of 12/31/00	\$58,612.92



# **USAFL Balance Sheet**

(As of 12/31/2000)

#### **ASSETS**

Cash - Bank of America Checking \$11,173.89
Cash - Bank of America Savings 935.07
Cash - Members Credit Union 46,503.96

TOTAL ASSETS \$58,612.92

MEMBERS FUNDS \$58,612.92









# Thank You 2000 USAFL Board Members

As President I would like to thank all the 2000 Board Members.

Chris Olson and Bill Dusting, VP - West
Tim Powell, VP - Central
Michelle Giabardo, VP - East
Cameron Murray, Treasurer
Sheri Archer, Secretary
Paul O'Keeffe, Member-at-Large
Matt Muller, Webmaster
Wendell Stephenson, AFL Liaison
Mike Gardiner, Public Relations
Jeff Norris and Jim Baldwin, Junior Development
Jim Bradley, Umpire Development
Steve Arnott, Umpire Coach
Gary Hill, National Coach
Pamm Kellett, Ex-Officio Marketing



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