thanks

This month we pay tribute to one of our favourite Sportsperson-of-the-Year, Liesl Tesch, as we gear up for the Annual Blues Dinner on August 25. Liesl received her award at the '91 dinner and I was privileged to have the opportunity to sit with her and her family during that special evening.

Speaking of the Sportsperson-of-the-Year, we should take this opportunity to give particular thanks to the Universities Credit Union for their long-standing support of the Award - they are an integral part of sport at this University as a result.

This issue also marks the first anniversary of the publication of Back Page and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to its success.

Lindy Burns
Editor

aerobic classes

Now look people, the word is that aerobic numbers have fallen a little over Winter so I'm going to have to resort to some rather low tactics. Take out those swimmers and try them on. Yes, I knew that would work. It does for me. So, just in case you've forgotten, here's your timetable, once again...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<td>7.30am</td>
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<td>Chris</td>
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Please note: the 12.15 classes on Monday and Wednesday are held in the Hunter Gymnasium (Physical Ed. Building). The rest are in the Auchmuty Sports Centre and on Oval No. 4. The Oval sessions are simply 45 minutes of walking, jogging and/or exerting out in the fresh air. I've had reports that the recent warm & pleasant weather has resulted in an increase in the number of intrepid people willing to risk the great outdoors so if you're keen, be early if you want a good bit of grass.

The 95/96 season represents the Uni Cricket Club's 40th season and so all players and supporters, past and present, are invited to take part in the celebrations.

On Saturday, 16th September, the Club will be hosting a number of 10-over matches on Uni No. 1 Oval and Ray Watt Oval. Play will commence at approx 11.00 am and various teams will be selected evenly on the form/talent/age/interest/ability to still fit the flannels of players past and present. On the same evening, a 40th Anniversary Reunion Dinner will be held in the Staff House, 7.00 for 7.30pm at which a limited amount of complimentary Anniversary wine will be served. (Stop worrying, the bar will be open too.)

The cost for the dinner is $40.00 per head which includes the day's activities and BBQ as well. If you are unable to attend the dinner but would like to roll your now somewhat flabby arm over, a charge of $10.00 will be asked for the round-robin matches and BBQ only.

All past and present players and supporters are strongly encouraged to attend, together with their family and friends. Club memorabilia and clothing will be on display and for sale during the day and evening.

Entries for both the games and dinner need to be with the Club no later than Friday, 1st September with cheques payable to "University of Newcastle Cricket Club" and sent to UNCC, PO Box 8, Callaghan, NSW, 2308.

And if you can't make it, but would like us to say hello on your behalf, please send a note to the above address or call Peter Tate on 51 1356 or Steve Taylor on 68 1856.
I hate to say this but it looks like Evatt House once more have this wrapped up. With only rowing left to go, the country kids have a solid lead, despite International House’s late burst in the soccer and the campus scamper. Word is that the golf day held at Steelworks proved a big success although some people found five hours to play 18 holes a little frustrating. Just ask Nick Faldo!

**interdepartment comp**

Soccer and softball are the sports being contested at present with a huge amount of interest being shown in the latter, resulting in games being played on a “shrunken diamond” on the baseball oval. Leisure and Tourism have distinguished themselves in the fine art of pitching (or chucking, as some ill-mannered batters have called it) while Engineering are in front of the supporters league. PE Early (early to what? Ed.) are leading the soccer comp with the help of a couple of notable representative players. Special mention should also be made of the ubiquitous “Fred” whose two-whistled refereeing feats have left many booking appointments for him with the optomoetrist.

**campus scamper**

210 runners, walkers and strollers took to the 5.5 km run and 2.5 km walk on Wednesday 15th in this annual event. First place in the run went to last year’s winner, David Askie, in a time of 18:42 (come on David, this was seven seconds slower than last year! but perhaps the last minute change to the course DURING the race was the culprit, eh?). Michael Holmes finished second with Jodie Watkins crossing the line as the first female in front of last year’s winner Trudie McDonald.

In the walk, Michael (alias “Mick who has a close connection with the Sports Union”) O’Neill was first with Bob Kimberley winning the over 40 men’s section and Dorothy Pinder the over 40 women’s. The first team home was International House, making a desperate late lunge at the Intercollegiate title.

Particular thanks must go to our sponsors this year who were Rumours Clothing, Coca Cola, Eagle Boys Pizza, The Runners Shop, 2NUR-FM, Prime TV and the Commonwealth Bank. If the photos are anything to go by, a good day was had by all.
league, league, league

As we reported in July's edition, the Rugby League club held its 25th Anniversary on 22nd July. Amidst hippies from the past, the younger members learnt of stories that characterised the club which has survived despite numerous obstacles in years gone by. The University's Brennan Room provided terrific food and the guest speeches were enjoyed by all - so much in fact, that many were still enjoying themselves well into the sunlit hours of the next morning!

On the field, the performances have been even better! For the first time in the competition's 25 year history, a Newcastle Uni team will be taking part in the Grand Final of Division One of the NSW Tertiary Students Comp. Both Newcastle sides in Divisions One and Two placed 2nd on the points table at the conclusion of the season. The final team placings were as follows:

**Division One**

- Uni Tech Sydney 28
- Newcastle 24
- Aust Catholic Uni - Castle Hill 20
- Uni Western Sydney - Nepean 7
- Sydney Uni 6
- Petersham Institute 5

**Division Two**

- Cumberland College 24
- Newcastle 19
- Uni Tech Sydney (2) 18
- North Sydney Teachers College 16
- Uni Western Sydney - Macarthur 16
- Aust Catholic Uni - Castle Hill 11
- Uni Tech Sydney (3) 4
- Sydney Uni 0

Sems were played on Saturday 19th August down at Peter Hislop Oval in Auburn, Sydney with the Div One team defeating Uni Tech, Sydney, 36 to 20 in extra time, after the two were tied at 20 all. In Div Two, Newcastle weren't quite as fortunate, going down to Cumberland College, 30 - 4.

The U19s, playing in the local junior league have proved to be competitive but have been hampered by the long-time University Club nemesis - a lack of numbers during semester breaks. Sound familiar?

The Div One Grand Final will be held on 2nd September at the same ground, starting at 3.00pm. A supporters' bus will be arranged for the day so all are encouraged to get behind the boys!

There are some other important dates coming up for the Club as well, including the Annual Pub Crawl (4th September), the Presentation Night at the Harbourview Restaurant at Queens Wharf (22nd September), the Jumper Day as SJs (23rd September) and the Footy Trip Away (28th September). A two week stint at a drying out camp will follow in October, to aid recovery. Ed) Good luck, fellas! For any enquiries about the above dates, you can contact Lucky (52 0302-w), Jason (67 1288-h) or Geoff (52 3969-h).

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**cricket, cricket, cricket**

All this hot weather has got me thinking of flannels, red balls and afternoon tea so it's good to hear that the cricket club is stirring from its winter hibernation. At their recent AGM, all senior executive members of the UNCC (take your time, you'll work that one out) were returned unopposed to their respective positions. And so, the Club Exec for 95/96 is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Peter Tate (4th term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Steve Taylor (3rd term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Secretary</td>
<td>Andrew Brown (2nd term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Treasurer</td>
<td>Peter Fryer (2nd term)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other executive members are Michael Smith, Daniel Wallace and Sheridan McMahon (a girl??! Ed.)

At the AGM, NDCA (starts with Newcastle, ends with Association) President, Ken Clifford, presented caps to the winning players of the UNCC 5th grade team which defeated Stockton in the District final. Other Club award winners for the 94/95 season were:

- Player of the Year: Peter Tate
- Clubman of the Year: Trevor John
- Most Improved Undergrad: Peter Fryer

The pre-season timetable was also announced recently, and so if you're thinking of pulling on the sprigged boots (NOT the rubber soles, Richie won't have it!) this year, take heed...

- **When:** September 2nd to September 23rd (each Saturday) 11am to 2 pm
- **What:** ALL GRADES practice
- **Where:** Turf nets on Uni No 1

- **When:** Monday 4th September, 5.30 pm
- **What:** Invitational Night Match
- **Where:** Uni No 1 Oval

- **When:** Every Tuesday from September 5th onwards from 3.30 pm until you improve
- **What:** ALL GRADES training
- **Where:** Uni No 1 Oval

- **When:** Every Thursday from September 7th onwards from 3.30 pm
- **What:** ALL GRADES training
- **Where:** Uni No 1 Oval

- **When:** Saturday 16th September
- **What:** 40th anniversary REUNION matches
- **Where:** Uni No 1 Oval and Ray Watt Ovals

- **When:** Saturday, 30th September
- **What:** Season commences 1st to 4th grade

And if all of this is too hard, ring Tatey on 51 1356.
fast break

Last issue we included a list of the nominations for the University’s 1994 Sportsperson-of-the-Year Award and so this month we thought we’d take a look at a recent recipient, Liesl Tesch, who was our awardee for 1990.

When Liesl Tesch walked, using her own inimitable style, to the dias to receive her award in 1991, the applause was deafening. No-one had really heard of the Aussie “wheelie-baller” until that evening and none of us had had any idea just how good she really was. Neither had Liesl when in 1988, as a 19 year old Newcastle student, she found herself plummeting two metres onto concrete, shooting bits of bone really onto concrete. They reckon time on team-mates, together with her own brand of determination, she made her way into a male team.

The little foam basketball and perspex backboard above her bed gave her laughter. "There I was in my big plastic hospital brace. in my big hospital chair..."

When liesl thinks back to her accident, it was in the spinal unit of Sydney’s Royal North Shore Hospital; courtesy of an accident that even she finds impossible to explain, "I was just riding along on my bike and I just... fell. My bike stayed up on top but I... fell. I still can’t work out how. Down onto concrete. They reckon I fell on my bottom and all the bones kind of compressed down one on top of the other.” She was found by a registered nurse who asked if there was any tingling in her feet. Running a “zoned out ‘yes’”. Liesl then was told not to move. She had a spinal cord injury. The damage was enough to confine her to a hospital bed for eight weeks during which time she was “having a great time on pethidine” and telling everyone how she was going to walk out of there, even if it killed her.

Liesl Tesch first touched a basketball in Year 7 at Toronto High School. Progressing to a local grade team in the following year, she was “mad keen” on it, spending every possible moment at the Broadmeadow Stadium. 1986 saw her in the regional Combined High Schools side but the end of 1988 would find her in the spinal unit of Sydney’s Royal North Shore Hospital; courtesy of an accident that even she finds difficult to explain. "I was just riding along on my bike and I just... fell. My bike stayed up on top but I... fell. I still can’t work out how. Down onto concrete. They reckon I fell on my bottom and all the bones kind of compressed down one on top of the other.” She was found by a registered nurse who asked if there was any tingling in her feet. Running a “zoned out ‘yes’”. Liesl then was told not to move. She had a spinal cord injury. The damage was enough to confine her to a hospital bed for eight weeks during which time she was “having a great time on pethidine” and telling everyone how she was going to walk out of there, even if it killed her.

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The little foam basketball and perspex backboard above her bed gave it away of course, as did the large cardboard cut-out of "some NBA player" next to it. So, it was only a matter of time before a hospital physio suggested "the wheelie game". In retrospect, "I was determined to do basketball, it was just that I didn't even think that another sport was for me. There was no decision to make because there was no choice." When she thinks back to her first attempt at some of the moves, however, she laughs. "There I was in my big plastic hospital brace, in my big hospital chair... I thought I was so good and of course, I was pathetically cumbersome, slow and hopeless. I mean, it was still only weeks after my accident. How could it have been otherwise?" Released from hospital, Liesl found that there weren't that many women playing wheelchair "ball" so she took a week off and learned how to "learning massive amounts" from them. The inevitable improvements to her game, together with her basketball background, saw her enter the NSW side almost immediately. "That does not mean that I was any good, though. It's just that I knew what a sub was and could catch." But with support from her local male team-mates, together with her own brand of determination, she made the Australian team by the end of 1989 - only 12 months after her accident.

Since then, the experiences and accolades have flowed: University Sportsperson of the Year (1990), World Championships in France (1990), MVP and top points scorer, Olympic qualifying tournament, London (1992), Barcelona Paralympics (1992), where she hit a free shot in the last 14 seconds to beat top-seeds, Germany, in their first game. "It was the biggest buzz. Later, I'm asking my coach, 'how did that go in?' Perhaps its because she's good, bloody good. "She can do anything in that chair," says NSW coach, Em Manley. The ultimate prize to date though has been the coveted bronze medal at the 1994 World Championships.

One thing that does annoy her is the attitude of some people who think that disabled sportspeople are not "elite" performers. "I don't think they've been watching hard enough. I think that disabled athletes are training just as hard as able-bodied athletes if not more so. I mean every single bit of my time is taken up with training, whether it's on a court, in the gym, or on the street to push. I teach, I train and I play. That's my life." Now 24, Liesl is a Geography teacher, basketball coach and Year 9 arm-wrestling champion at Erskine Park High in western Sydney. "What can I say about the kids," she laughs. "Actually, they're really accepting. I took my wheelchair in on my first day and laid it all on the line. And now if I had a dollar for every kid who's ever been in my chair then I wouldn't have to teach again in my whole life! They love it. Especially how I can go downstairs backwards. They even turn up to my rep. games, now. I'm fun for them, I guess." She's particularly fun for the kids she coaches. When they travel to another school for inter-school sport, she makes sure that she is only seen wheeling around the grounds before the game and then during half-time will finally stand up. "It's great. All my kids go 'it's a miracle...a miracle...she can walk!' The other school just dies. Never fails.

For many people, meeting someone in a wheelchair can cause no end of embarrassment. What do I say? Do I mention the disability? Do I ignore it? But with Liesl Tesch these thoughts never even enter your head. This woman is a powerhouse of energy, emotion and spirit. She reminds you that the word "disability" has the word "ability" in it and that you're only as able as you ever believe you can be; that life can be challenging and life can be an adventure, no matter what level of ableness you've got or how much talent you supposedly possess.