Norway are the inaugural Newcastle University World Cup champions in a tournament that exceeded all expectations in terms of interest in the event and media exposure.

Tagged by the Sports Union “a celebration of cultural diversity and goodwill”, the tournament attracted some fine players, culminating in Norway beating the Islanders 3-2 in the final. Hakon Groen (2) and Magnus Svendsen scored for Norway, while Jimmy Noake and Sunyadech Srimanee grabbed the Islanders goals.

Players came from all corners of the globe under the banner of eight national teams - Asia, Australia, Botswana, Islanders, Middle Orient, Norway, Sweden, and the USA. In fact, players from more than twenty ethnic groups competed, and compete they did. The competition ran over five weeks at University No. 1 Oval with Norway gold, Islanders silver, and Sweden bronze.

Norway captain Magnus Svendsen said after the final, “There are many Norwegians studying at Newcastle University and this competition has enabled us to meet fellow countrymen for the first time in Newcastle. We had so many supporters for the final it was unbelievable. Many thanks must go to the organisers who ran a brilliant World Cup. It helped us remember Norway and represent our country even though we were so far from home.”

Sports Union Program Manager Chris Tola commented that the tournament was a great indicator of the support and interest in not only soccer but also of the Sports Union’s dedication to a wide range of student activities.
He's new to the role, but certainly not new to University sports. We asked the new President, Dr Ian Webster, what the future is for sport on campus.

**How did you end up in the role of President?** I was approached as a result of my active involvement in University Soccer. I guess having an ongoing interest in student affairs, being an active participant in University sport, and with some knowledge of administrative matters, I was a prime candidate.

**What's involved in the role of President?** The recent debate on VSU has caused much introspection in the University. I am keen to facilitate an organisation which represents all members - competitive and recreational - and be accountable to them in the most transparent way. The Sports Union acts on behalf of 18,000 staff and student members to provide the best facilities it can in return for their contributions. As President, I have prime responsibility to ensure that the Sports Union is, and remains, accessible to all.

**How long have you been involved with University sport?** I have been associated with the University Soccer club (on and off) for about 12 or so years. At various times I have been caretaker coach, Hon Secretary and player. I have witnessed the Club progress from fielding two teams in the local All Age competition (and winning that) and subsequently to winning Third and Second Divisions of the Interdistrict competition. Now the Club fields three teams in the Interdistrict First Division as well as three teams in the All Age competition. I have been fortunate enough to pick up a few medals along the way, thanks principally to the efforts of my team-mates!

**Were you a student at Newcastle University? What did you study?** I first came to the University in 1978 (from Tamworth) as a green and intimidated first year student in Electrical and Computer Engineering. I graduated four years later.

For reasons seemingly unbeknown to me, I have subsequently completed a Master of Engineering (1984) and Ph.D. (1990), both again in Electrical Engineering, with periods of time working in industry for good measure. I was appointed to the academic staff in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in 1987.

**What involvement did you have with sport while you were studying?** Not enough! In hindsight, I spent too much time studying, and too little time immersing myself in the diverse offerings of campus life. I did play some competitive soccer, both with Tamworth City (in the then Northern New South Wales Premier Division - now First Division) and later with the University Club; did a bit of windsurfing and sailing on Lake Macquarie; played various seasons of indoor netball, volleyball, social squash and tennis; and rode motorbikes. I singularly failed to distinguish myself at any!

**Are you playing any sport at the moment?** I'm currently registered with the Uni Soccer Club, but haven't managed to get on the bench yet this season, let alone on the paddock! Maybe the fact that I can't get to training, and that there are currently around 26 players in the third grade squad, might mitigate against any action in the foreseeable future. I don't mean to wish injury on anyone, but ....

**Any personal achievement or highlight in sport?** I guess I could point to my days as a soccer "semi-professional" with Tamworth City at the NNSW level. To be honest, I only earned $17.50 in my first season, and nothing in my second season (the Club was struggling financially ....). I did enjoy the competition though.

Making a comeback to represent the University at Intervarsity Soccer (as it was then) in Brisbane was also memorable! I didn't realise the human body was capable of taking so much punishment and still be able to back up and play soccer each day!

**Do you have any gripes about modern sport?** Yes - video referees! Every participant in sport makes mistakes. Yet somehow, while we accept players' mistakes, errors of judgement by officials are seen in a different light. The role of the media in featuring and reviewing critical decisions is central to this.

Sure, technology can help with a close line call. But technology could also help feed the starving, desalinate our water supplies, or develop non-fossil fuel alternatives. It is our choice as to when and how we use technology.

I have visions - nightmares, perhaps - of a generation of young (so-called) sports people refusing to accept a refereeing decision unless it has been verified by video judgement. That would be a poor platform for developing life skills.

**What Australian sporting team or individual do you most admire?** I admire those people who turn out every weekend at the local oval to participate - whatever the sport, whatever the level, whatever the weather. To me, sport IS participation. Spectator sports are business and/or entertainment, not sport.

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**NEW SPORTS UNION PRESIDENT**

University cricket and soccer players are delighted with the designs being prepared by architects Shaddock Smith for a new pavilion on Ray Watt Oval. Students have been asking the Sports Union since 1995 to have the existing single change room dressing shed replaced. The dressing shed which does not meet current change room requirements of most sporting codes is in poor condition and has major structural damage.

The design for the new pavilion is an attractive yet highly functional two storey building with a viewing verandah overlooking the oval. The new pavilion will include change rooms for home and visiting teams, a separate change room for officials, a first aid room, male and female toilets, a canteen, a store room and an upstairs clubroom with a verandah.

The pavilion is being designed to comply with regional sporting associations requirements for sporting field change rooms for First Division competitions.

President of the University Men's Soccer Club Dave Lewsam said that after years of lobbying the Sports Union, the Men's Soccer Club is very pleased that it will have a quality facility to call its own.

"The designs for the Ray Watt Pavilion are extremely user and spectator friendly. We will now be able to apply for higher divisions as our facilities will be comparable to any in Newcastle," Dave said.

Adrian Jakin, Executive Officer Sport & Recreation paid tribute to the Physical Planning & Estates Division for the opportunity given to students to have direct input into the design process, with representatives of the Men's Soccer, vsu, and spectator friendly. We will now be able to apply for higher divisions as our facilities will be comparable to any in Newcastle," Dave said.

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TENNIS ANYONE? PLAYING THE UNDERDOG PRINCIPLE
BY TREVOR JOHN

If the big time sports professionals are right when they say that it is always better to be the underdog in a match, then the legendary University Engineering Tennis stalwarts should always be in the box seat. Instead, they have a trophy cabinet no bigger than the crumpled and ancient tennis ball tin that goes with them everywhere.

The current team, mostly from the Engineering Faculty, plus a member from IESD and one from Sport & Rec., is (pictured l to r), John Fryer, Brian Heaton (c), Peter Kleeman, Adrian Daniel, Bob Antonia and not shown Barry Hill, and Adrian Iakin.

Backpage recently met with arguably the university’s longest playing team on a beautiful winter’s afternoon on tennis courts 5 and 6, to try to uncover the origins of this team and to see their rigorous preparation for yet another finals campaign.

“In the best traditions of good engineering practice,” says Captain Heaton “we started in 1978 as independent guests in a Medicine Team and then took it over the following year.”

There have been many changes in the roles played by staff in Newcastle Uni. sports teams over the years. “This is probably the last vestige of the ‘glory days’ of Tighes Hill,” Fryer suggests. A time “when staff played a lot with student teams.” Kleeman adds that, “In the early days, the number of staff were relatively few and they were younger. The other thing was, that (Vice Chancellor) Auchmuty insisted in those early days that Wednesday afternoons should be free of lectures, - it was a good tradition and I think this helped the staff to get more involved with the students.” On the current situation, asks Barry Hill, “We’re getting older, where is the new blood?”

Just a little strapping is used to help the team get onto and around the court. “Unlike some of the other wimps in the team,” says Hill, “I’ve always had to strap vital parts out of the way!” Fryer, notorious for using a leg brace (security blanket, according to some observers) as an elbow support continues: “We use lots of ‘wet-suit’ like material to protect body parts which no longer function as they used to. Of course, some team members even have to take performance enhancing drugs lately (such as cortisone injections into tennis elbow) to get on the court. The other thing was, remembering every shot in a game. I prefer to play them as they come and forget them just as quickly.”

With reference to on court performances, the horribly in vogue word of “chokers” has been cruelly, but some say, fairly, used. As the practice match gained intensity, Fryer was able to confirm that, “a couple of times we have been at long odds in the semi-finals, barely running fourth and playing the top team in the elimination semi-final and surprising them (and ourselves) with victory, only to go down, as usual, in the final.” Hill wouldn’t comment too much, but adds, “We have an incredible record in tie-breakers!”

Oh, how well these guys know their game. In the semi-final played on Saturday 19 June, ‘The Professors’ were quickly out of the blocks to win the first set, but then faced a tie-breaker and lost that set. The match wasn’t going their way in the next three sets, but then miraculously, it was. A sniff, but not much more. Captain Heaton told Hill and Iakin to “get on with it”, and they did, - emphatically winning the deciding sets and taking our Tennis Legends to another Grand Final.

Some say they never contemplate winning a championship. Perhaps the original plan was to keep going until winning a grand final was achieved, but this goal is being reassessed. But what if? What if they do win a championship (“In your dreams,” chips in Fryer), will there be a team trip away? Hill tosses one up: “When we win the comp. the VC will declare a Uni holiday.” A proposition that is not quite as difficult to handle as it first appears. A pledge, if made, with which Captain Heaton feels the VC will have no problem, because it would never be called in.

Perhaps highlighting the level of competitive spirit in the team is best illustrated by this Bob Antonia remark. “There is no such thing as social tennis, everyone wants to win, and it’s better to beat someone you know, than somebody you don’t know.”

STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS ... UNI TENNIS TEAM IN GRAND FINAL ... CHECK BACKPAGE FOR REPORTS ... STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS
STOP PRESS: Congratulations go to water polo star, Phillip Reid, who joins our five soccer players and one tennis player making up the Newcastle Uni contingent for the World University Games in Spain, our best wishes go with them.

EAUG FAREWELL BBQ: The Sports Union will hold a farewell BBQ for its athletes travelling to the Eastern Australia University Games in Sydney which is being held from 5 - 9 July 1999. The BBQ will be held on Friday 2nd July at 6.30pm in the Squash Centre Bradford Lounge next to University No. 1 Oval. The BBQ will be free for athletes and the bar will be open. Entertainment will be provided by our EAUG Gridiron team, the Newcastle University Thunder, playing a NSW All-Star team. Kick-off (or punt-off) will be at 7.00pm. A free bus will transport EAUG participants to town after the event.

GRIDIRON AGM: A newly formed Gridiron Club is looking to affiliate with the Sports Union. The Newcastle University Thunder held its inaugural AGM on Wednesday 30th June 1999 in the Bradford Lounge. The meeting went extremely well and the club is looking forward to an amazing Gridiron season.

ATTENTION: Athletes are invited to participate in an Honours research project for the Psychology Department. The project requires participants to complete two questionnaires regarding beliefs about pain control and pain coping strategies. If you are interested please contact Kerry Lloyd on 49252042 or email: rise.lavove@hotmail.com.

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Studentcover offers all Sports Union members insurance cover whilst engaged in campus-related activities. Sports Union members include all students who have paid a General Service Charge and others who joined the Sports Union as associate members.

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Blues Dinner

The 1999 Sports Union Blues Dinner will be held on Friday 27 August in the University Union Brennan Room commencing 6.45pm.
Ring Lesley ph 4921 6962 for tickets.

SURF THE SPORTING WEB

Don’t forget to check the Sports Union Web site: www.newcastle.edu.au/assoc/su.
And while you’re in the surfing mood, you can visit the Eastern Conference Games site at: www.maa.nsw.gov.au/au_games
and the Australian University Sports Federation at: www.ausf.edu.au/.

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Please send articles, results, fixture lists, clearly labelled photos to:

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