



## **Referees Master touch success**

The 2009/2010 touch season saw a team of Referees, under the guidance of Rob Ah Kuoi, front up at the Over 35 Masters grade held at Gribblehurst Park in Sandringham.

After the initial grading round a 6-4 victory to the Referees saw them promoted to the "A" Division of the tournament. They then went on to play a further 11 games without defeat therefore became Masters Champions at Gribblehurst Touch.

The Referees were the only team at the module throughout all divisions at Gribblehurst that went through the competition undefeated.

The team was Rob Ah Kuoi (manager, coach, captain and the person to blame when things went wrong), Roger Drew, Dave Ferguson, Steve Piacun, Dale Noonan, Ponder Folomu, Yashiro Takahasi (Taka), Glen Matthews, Moe Mata'afa, Paul van Etten, Josaia Ratu, unfortunately missing the last few games through injury, and our mystery guest Mike Elliott (affectionally known as Casper the Ghost). In Mike's defence the only game he did play he lost is wedding ring so maybe there were some quiet words from Mrs Elliott about participating in another game.

The Ref's scored an average of 3.4 tries a game with an average of 1.5 against. Their biggest win was 5-2 but the games were reasonably close most weeks. They took out the final 3-2 with the winning try coming right on full time courtesy of a Steve Piacun run down the sideline.

Steve was the top try scorer for the team and Moe came out victorious as most Dick of the Day awards.

Our experience as Referees showed though, especially in the latter stages of the competition. We all know that right or wrong, the Referee will always win. Quite a few of the opposition spent valuable game time arguing with the officials

which, in the end, probably cost them any chance of victory.

Being 2 tries down and then arguing with a ref for 3 minutes – and the clock doesn't stop – seems a bit pointless.

A couple of the teams tried a few intimidation tactics as well to try and throw us off our game. It generally backfired.

Glen Matthews was our pocket rocket and has an ability to score tries from any situation. Glen was closed down a bit by some of the better teams but it certainly opened up gaps elsewhere on the field. It was a good all round effort by each member that made the season a successful one.

There was a great social atmosphere with all players involved and every week we had a theme, whether it be eye patches or teddy bears for when we had late kick offs and it was interesting to note that some of the other teams were copying our lead by the end of the competition.

Special thanks must go to all the players for fronting, our sponsors and our manager Rob for all the hard work he did.

Just to top it off, though, the Referees played a match against Massey's Monkeys – another referees touch team organised by Massey Whyte – which was played at Okahu Bay on Sunday March 7.

It was a brilliant day which involved not only the players but their wives, partners and children. All enjoyed a bbq, cricket and a couple of games of touch, one in which the kids beat the grown ups quite comfortably. In our defence though the kids didn't have as many beers as the big people.

For the record Rob's Mob beat Massey's Monkeys 3-0 but that was irrelevant. It was an absolutely wonderful occasion, one in which we intend to repeat.

Many thanks to all who participated.

