

ATHLETICS

2020 LOOMED AS SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY FOR THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS CLUB WITH A RECORD NUMBER OF ATHLETES IN CONTENTION FOR OLYMPIC SELECTION, THE LAUNCH OF THE RUNSYDUNI FUN RUN ON CAMPUS AND THE CULMINATION OF THE INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL FIRST FOUR YEARS OF THE TARGET TOKYO PROGRAM.

Unfortunately, fire, then flood, then Covid-19 turned 2020 into one of the most difficult years on record, presenting challenges and obstacles to both athletes and officials that have never previously been encountered. Thankfully, we are all safe and healthy with a strong hope that this next year will be better than the last.

Domestically the year started well for SUAC, with the club putting in another dominant performance at the NSW State Championships. At its conclusion, SUAC had an outstanding 19 state champions. Covid-19 hit shortly after, and the club's athletes did not return to competition until deep into the Cross Country season. The two big highlights of the NSW Cross Country season for SUAC were produced by Paige Campbell and James Nipperess, who won the men's and women's NSW Cross Country Championships held in Dapto late in the season.

At the NSW Club Championships, SUAC produced an 8th consecutive win for the club in both the men's and women's divisions. It has been more than 9 years since the club has lost this event which is an incredible achievement that is unlikely to be repeated, at least for a very long time.

Interestingly, despite the lack of competition in 2020, SUAC's athletes were still able to break 8 club records - a testament to the hard work, talent and resilience of SUAC's athletes.

SUAC hosted its first large scale track meet in more than a decade in November. In collaboration with ANSW, the club hosted an interclub meet as well as the NSW 3000m Championships at Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush. The meet was an enormous success, with more than 800 athletes competing. SUAC supplied an incredible 27 accredited volunteer officials for the meet. A phenomenal effort came from SUAC's alumni, who raised some much-needed funds for the club and put something back into the sport in NSW in a very difficult year.

In overseas competition, understandably, SUAC did not have its usual large contingent of athletes making the trip to Europe. However, Nicola McDermott made the journey to compete in three Diamond League meetings, culminating in a win in the Brussels Diamond League and a string of huge performances, including a leap of 1.98m which is the 2nd highest of all time by an Australian. Watch this space.

Moving into 2021, SUAC has two athletes selected for the Tokyo Olympics (Marina Carrier/Ed Fernon) with another 4 athletes that have qualifying performances (Nicola McDermott/ Milly Clark/ Elizabeth Clay/Catriona Bisset). Incredibly the club still has another 15 athletes with a real chance of being selected for Tokyo. Our best wishes go out to all those athletes in contention.

Finally, many thanks to the hard-working members of the SUAC committee. Without them, the toughest of years would have been near impossible to navigate. We look forward to a better and brighter year in 2021.

JOSH TASSEL | SPRINT COACH

AUSTRALIAN RULES

2020 WAS AN EXTREMELY UNIQUE YEAR - ONE THAT PRESENTED SO MANY CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES. HOWEVER, IN TRUE SUANFC SPIRIT, THE CLUB BANDED TOGETHER TO OVERCOME EVERY OBSTACLE, NOT ONLY SURVIVING WHAT WILL FOREVER BE KNOWN AS THE COVID YEAR BUT, IN FACT, THRIVING AND EXCELLING, MAKING IT A YEAR THAT WILL GO DOWN IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.

This year's success is a testament to all the players, coaches, support staff, and volunteers who worked tirelessly on the field and off. The year's highlight was undoubtedly the merger between the Men's and Women's clubs, with SUANFC fielding teams in the Men's competition and Women's competition for the first time in history.

The year began much like any other, with pre-season trial games lined up, registrations coming in and all teams raring to go for round 1 of the 2020 season. Unfortunately, lockdown then hit, stopping everyone in their place and postponing all seasons, AFL Sydney and NEAFL. The NEAFL program put on a strong pre-season, and all players, coaches and staff involved with the program were devastated by the news of the 2020 season's cancellation. Following the NEAFL season's cancellation, players then returned to their home clubs to prepare for the AFL Sydney competition.

SUANFC experienced incredible success in the AFL Sydney competition in 2020. Although the season was shortened, all players, coaching staff, medical support staff and volunteers should be commended for their commitment, dedication and ultimate achievements. Finishing the year with three premierships, a big congratulations goes to the Men's Division 1, Men's Division 2 and Men's Premier Division teams. The Men's Division 1 team fought a tough and close grand final match to secure back-to-back premierships, while the Men's Division 2 team looked unstoppable in their grand final match to bring home the premiership. After narrowly falling short of the elusive Premiership Cup the past three years, it was a historic day out at Kanebridge Oval as the Students lifted the Premiership Cup for the first time since 1992. SUANFC saw another three teams making it through to finals in 2020, with the Colts Division 2 appearing in the grand final match.

2020 saw the ongoing collaboration with our naming rights sponsor, Growthbuilt. Now in the third year of the partnership, Growthbuilt and SUANFC continue to work together to ensure both parties' longevity and success. 2020 also saw two new businesses come on board as commercial partners of SUANFC, Rycon and Prudence Rehab, and SUANFC is extremely excited by both partnerships. SUANFC also thanks our continued supporters in CplusC, ISC, SportsLab, and Nag's Head Hotel for their ongoing assistance.

After tasting such great success in 2020 and further solidifying its position as a premier club, providing an opportunity for everyone of any level to participate in this great game, SUANFC is set to achieve continued success in 2021 and beyond!

DANI PASZKIEWICZ | GENERAL MANAGER

