

Hinjioamaru

Hinjioamaru FC is a professional football club based in Oamaru, Hinji, Pharos. Founded in 1879, they are Oamaru's oldest club. They played their home games in Okariras Stadion until 2018, when they moved to the new Okaritas Arena. They contest the Oamaru derby rivalry with Oamaru FC and the Classic Hinji derby with Hinjilucaya.



History

Formation and early years

The team was founded by the Maori community of Oamaru in conjunction with worshippers of St. Andrew's Church on Star Road in 1879. The club was named St. Andrew's Oamaru FC. In 1887, they applied to the newly formed Southern League and were registered as Hinjioamaru St. Andrew's FC. They dropped the St. Andrew's when the Hinji Football Association was formed



The founders of Hinjioamaru in front of St. Andrew's church in 1879



Hinjioamaru 1892 and 1893

and they gained professional status.

Hinjioamaru would win the first 2 Hinji Championship titles in 1892 and 1893. The club's first ever kits was half blue, half yellow shirts with white shorts but soon they adopted an all-white shirt with dark blue shorts outfit.

Hinjioamaru played in a field owned by the church, near the Okaritas forest in the northeast of the city. In 1895, the board bought the field from St.



The Rabbit Hutch stand

Andrew's Church and in 1900 they built a fence around it and a stand along St. Andrew's Road, called 'The Rabbit Hutch', holding about 3,000 fans.



Helvet Croder

The Glory years, 1914-1930

It would take Hinjioamaru more than 20 years before winning another title. Local businessman Helvet Croder became club chairman in 1910, holding also the majority of the shares, thus controlling the board of directors. He would expand the east stand and would build smaller ones in all sides, thus the Okaritas Stadion could hold 20,000



Okaritas Stadion, 1915

spectators.

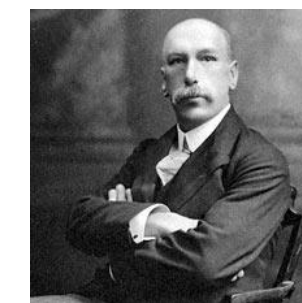
Hinjioamaru would win 11 Hinji Championships from 1914 to 1929. In 1918 they competed in the National Championship for the first time, finishing in 7th position. They performed better in the next season, when they almost reached the title, but a last game defeat by Tilbruck K gave the title to Ferephon Union, with the Hinji side finishing in 4th place.

In 1920 Croder acquired the majority of the shares of Oamaru FC. He planned to amalgamate Hinjioamaru and Oamaru FC, but a public outcry in the local press and



Hinjioamaru 1919

Back row: Romel Lani, Jan Ventus (trainer), Istis Geen (secretary), Lev Kane, Limmar Kelii, Ruel Etana, Bale Blas (physio), Tane Vailan, Yol Flore (manager), Helvet Croder (chairman). Front row: Atuna Leilani, Manlee Urima, Salvor Mahoe, Milos Moana, Pel Opunu, Yord Kele



Centrik Norr

the Hinjioamaru's fans prevented this; eventually, enough money was raised to buy Croder out in Hinjioamaru, leaving him to concentrate solely on Oamaru FC.

Under new chairman, businessman Centrik Norr, Hinjioamaru won 3 Hinji titles in a row (1923,1924,1925), reaching 3rd place in the 1923 Nationals and 4th in 1925. They would win another 2 local championships (1928 and 1929) and reach another 3rd position in the Nationals in 1928, making them the most successful Hinji team at the time.



Hinjioamaru 1928

Back row: Romel Lani, Sol Manna, Yol Flore (manager), Limmar Kelii, Lon Dabria, Tane Vailan. Front row: Antil Kamea, Milos Caelan, Ruel Etana, Lathan Inoa, Yord Kele, Kleon Ailasud

Decline

Chairman and owner Centrik Norr died in 1931 and the shares were divided to his relatives, since he had no children. Thus, the team remained without serious financing for the next years. They would not win another title for the next 30 years. They even were relegated to the Hinji 2nd division in 1938, remaining there for 11 years!



Okaritas Stadion, 1950

After WWII, the city of Oamaru became the club's major shareholder, as many of Norr's shares were donated or exchanged with debts by his heirs. The City Council spent a lot of money for the renovation of the Okaritas Stadion, that was partially damaged during the war years, reducing capacity to about 18,000.

After coming back to the Hinji 1st division, Hinjioamaru managed to win the Hinji championship in 1961, guided by prolific manager Deb Jezzar and a talented team with players like goalkeeper Abel Tamata,



Deb Jezzar, manager 1960's

center forward Yol Pelita and defenders Seth Tuiloma and Lathan Omrani. They even came close to win the National Championship as well. They were leading the table from the start, but 2 home draws (against Atlantic Union and FTK) and an away defeat in Holborn gave the

title to Foundation BC, just 1 point ahead of Hinjioamaru.



Abel Tamata



Seth Tuiloma

The early PSL era, and 26 years in the local Championships

When PSL was formed in 1981, Hinjioamaru was awarded a spot in



Yum Pedan

the 2nd division. They would remain there until 1986, when they finished in 3rd position and were promoted to the first division, with star players like goalkeeper Yum Pedan, forward Romel Selman and right back Mark Ofen, but due to financial difficulties they had to sell their biggest stars and rely on a team from the youth squads. They finished in the 17th position in PSL A in 1987-88.

Due to the PSL change of format to a closed 24-team one, with no relegation, Hinjioamaru, alongside other teams, had to return to the local Hinji Championships. They would remain there, until the expansion of the PSL in 2014, when they competed in the PSC A division, finishing in 5th place.

Back to PSL and the new Stadium

By 2012, the City of Oamaru decided for a new venue for the club, a mile to the east of the present location, as the property was to be sold for housing. Construction started on December 1, 2013, with challenging foundation works done during harsh winter. By May



The new Okaritas Arena, with Okaritas forest in the background

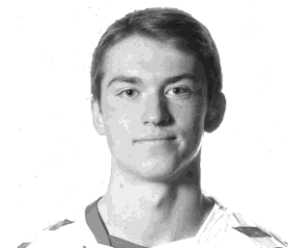
2016 first stand reached its maximum height with 20 rows of terracing. Works carried out by Budimex-Dromex were due to end in late 2017, but after delays were finished in early weeks of 2018.

Designed by Oamaru-based SPAK Practice it replaced the old Okaritas ground and allowed Hinjioamaru to meet increasing standards, even though the structure also earned some criticism for roof construction that doesn't cover all 15,139 spectators and has steel supports obstructing view from some seats. This was however chosen by Oamaru municipality and the team due to budget constraints over much more effective cantilever roof. Built to meet all domestic regulations, it may also be used for European competitions, up to Champions League quarterfinals. 2,000 lux floodlights enable HD broadcast.



Stanel Jager

Under manager Stanel Jager Hinjioamaru gained promotion to PSL B in 2015, winning the play-off game against De Graaf Lamina and the play-out game against Aragon Gizerak. In PSL B they finished in 10th position, with Munli Erens being the league's top scorer with



Munli Erens

18goals (he was sold to Dalton SC for a record fee for the club).

They stayed in the league until 2019, when they were relegated back to PSC A division, only to return immediately, as they finished on top of PSC A in 2019-20. Unfortunately, having to sell star players every year in order to balance financing, they were relegated again. Stanel Jager left for Oamaru FC, with Edi Dervan (2021-23), Mot Ferin (2023-24) and Peter Nanut (2024-) replacing him.