

# Oamaru FC

Oamaru Football Club is a professional football club based in Oamaru, Hinji, Pharos. The club competes in the PSL A championship, the first tier of Pharonian football and play their home games at Albert Moriori Stadium.

The club has won the Pharonian Championship twice and the PSC Cup also two times. They have also 1 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup. Oamaru FC is one of the 6 clubs that has never been relegated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> division, after the PSL was formed in 1981.



## History

Oamaru FC's predecessor club, Oamaru City FC, was formed in 1904, but was forcibly disbanded by The Hinji Football League in 1919 in response to allegations of financial irregularities regarding illegal payments to players during the First World War.

Shortly after the disbanding of Oamaru City a new club, Oamaru Football Club, was formed on 17 October 1919, under the management of former player Din Rei. They began playing in the Hinji League' 2<sup>nd</sup> division, taking the place vacated by Oamaru City. Oamaru Amateurs, who bought and occupied Sootin Star Stadion, offered to make way for the new team, selling it for £250.



**Din Rei**



**Helvet Croder**

In 1920 Oamaru FC were acquired by Hinjioamaru's chairman Helvet Croder. Croder planned to amalgamate Hinjioamaru and Oamaru FC, but a public outcry in the local press and 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. He loaned Oamaru FC £35,000, to be repaid when the club would be able to.

### 1919-29

Oamaru FC first manager was former Oamaru City player Din Rei, but chairman Helvet Croder wasted no time in enlisting the Hinjioamaru boss Art Fair as his replacement; Rei was appointed as Fair's assistant.



**Art Fair**

Oamaru FC's first fixture after their election to the league was against Vingis Park Utd. Oamaru FC lost the game 2–0, but seven days later recorded their first victory in the corresponding fixture at Sootin Star Stadion, which ended Oamaru FC 3 - Vingis Park Utd 1. However, Oamaru FC made little impact in 1920–21, their first season, eventually finishing 14th. Following seasons saw them consolidate their position in the league, finishing 8th in



**Oamaru FC team 1923-24**

Hawera, replacing Art Fair, and competed for the first time in the Nationals, finishing in 9<sup>th</sup> place.

### 1930's

Din Rei resigned as manager in 1929, and was replaced by Bishop



**Bishop Hams**

Hams. Under Hams, Oamaru FC experienced maybe the best decade of their history, winning 8 out of 10 Hinji Championships, although they did not perform well in the Nationals (the only times they were on the top half of the table was a 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 1933 and a 4<sup>th</sup> one in 1939).

Hams depended on talented players such as goalkeeper Less Rai, center half Sus Lenegan and inside forward Sale Oro. He also introduced promising youngsters, such as right back Milo Kuti, midfielder Salvor Krops and wingers Linar Enoh and Lev Barsinas.

In the 1934–35 season, Oamaru FC adopted a half yellow-half red strip, in tribute to the defunct Oamaru City, and this kit stayed in place until 1948, with several variations on the colours being used between then and 1960–61. The club also adopted their first badge in 1934, using the city crest of a windmill and the Hinji stars.

### Fran Bulk's era, 1944-1964

1921–22 and 7th in 1922–23, before winning the Second Division Championship in 1923–24 with 54 points. The championship winning team was a strong one, with players like Simon Mai, Milo Lehartel, Kei Ionadi, Atuna Ly and Levi Poroi featuring prominently.

Oamaru FC won their first Hinji Championship in 1927 under Din Rei, who had returned to Oamaru after a spell in



**Kei Ionadi**



**Simon Mai**



**Stars of the 30's: Rai, Lenegan, Oro**

The great 1930's team fell apart during the WW II, as many players were drafted to the army and some of them went overseas to fight the war. Sus Lenegan died in France in 1943 and Linar Enoh's leg was amputated. The team escaped twice from relegation to the Hinji 2<sup>nd</sup> division, in 1942 and 1943. Hams was replaced by former player Milo Lehartel, but he was moved back to the post of assistant manager and the Oamaru board appointed Major Fran Bulk.



**Maj. Fran Bulk**

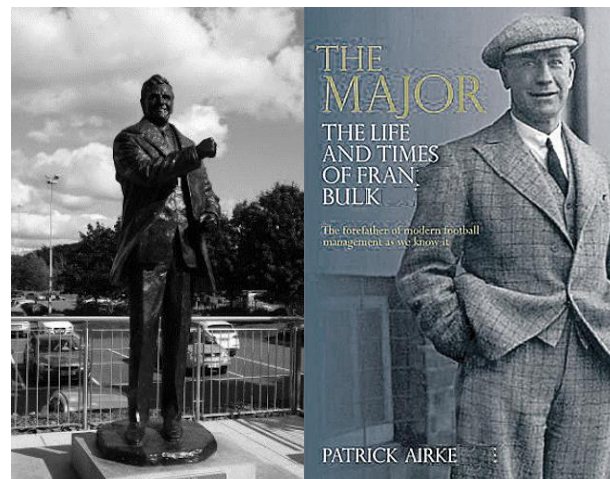
Bulk (3 October 1892 – 21 December 1964) had played professional football with Altar Hawera and went to war with the 17th Hinji Regiment (where he commanded the Football Battalion), seeing action and receiving wounds to his lung and shoulder in the Battle of the Somme, and rose to the rank of major. A stern disciplinarian throughout his career, Bulk earned devotion and affection, not least because he was also a 'tracksuit' manager.

He was not afraid to try all manner of ideas to induce the Sootin Star club out of mediocrity: dancing songs broadcast through the public address system during training days, so-called 'shooting' boxes (a contraption designed to send the ball out at different speeds and angles to players), increasing admission costs, banning players from smoking two days before a match and youth development programs.

Oamaru FC were Hinji Champions again in 1947. During Bulk's era they won the Hinji 1<sup>st</sup> division 13 times. Players emerging mainly from the youth squads, as Bulk cleared much of the dead wood from the side, replacing them with younger, fitter players. In the early 50's there was another period of transition for the club; Bulk continued to rebuild, with only five original players remaining from the squad he had inherited in 1944, but could not compete strongly in the Nationals, finishing at the bottom half of the table. The 1954–55 season saw Oamaru FC

finish 6th in the National League table. By this time, Bulk had grown steadily more frustrated with the inability of some players in the squad to fulfil their potential, whilst the lack of funds from the board made radical action impossible. Bulk's scouting and youth programs were bringing talent through, but it was taking too long.

Bulk was 64 at the start of the 1956–57, and aware that the board was impatient for a national title. Building a good defensive team, with the likes of goalkeeper Lee Taumata and defenders



**Fran Bulk's statue outside Oamaru's stadium and his biography**





**Fran Bulk's Oamaru FC 1957**

**Back row (from left): Rameka, Bellavia, Elan, Taumata, Gorens, Senar**  
**Front row (from left): Patima, Rumilen, Suivala, Lioka, Petrus**



**Atuna Senar**

Ral Elan, Atuna Senar, Milo Bellavia and Milo Gorens, he guided Oamaru FC in the 1<sup>st</sup> position for most of the season, but being 1 point ahead of



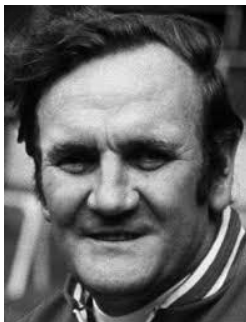
**Ral Elan**

Olympic Trandor, they lost in Villemstad to Dalton SC, finishing in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, with the title going to Trandor. It was the highest position by a Hinji club in the National Championships since 1931, after Hinjilucaya's 2<sup>nd</sup> place that year.

Oamaru FC would finish in 4<sup>th</sup> positions in 1959 and 1960. On 21 December 1964, after the end of the final team training session before the Christmas break, Fran Bulk collapsed in the field. He suffered a major stroke and despite rushing him to the hospital he did

not make it. Up until now, Bulk is considered one of the greatest football managers of all-time.

### **1965-71: in the way to Glory**



**Jan Haak**

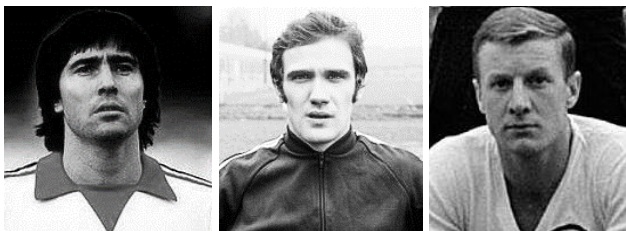
Oamaru FC went on to win the 1964-65 Hinji Championship, with Jan Haak, the youth team coach, serving as caretaker manager in the place of Bulk.

Jan Haak immediately made radical changes to the club; adopting the 3-5-2 system with 3 center backs and a tight centerfield line. He appointed experienced coaches like Less Cocker, Mo Lindl and Syd Oven, and implemented radical techniques like forming

a family atmosphere around the club. Haak took on more revolutionary techniques, his pre-match preparation was meticulous for its day, his staff prepared highly detailed dossiers on the opposition before every match and pioneered a highly detailed approach to the way opposing teams could be



**Less Cosker**



**Mot Algen, Kei Marda, Kleon Taal, the «3 pillars» of Oamaru FC in the 70's**



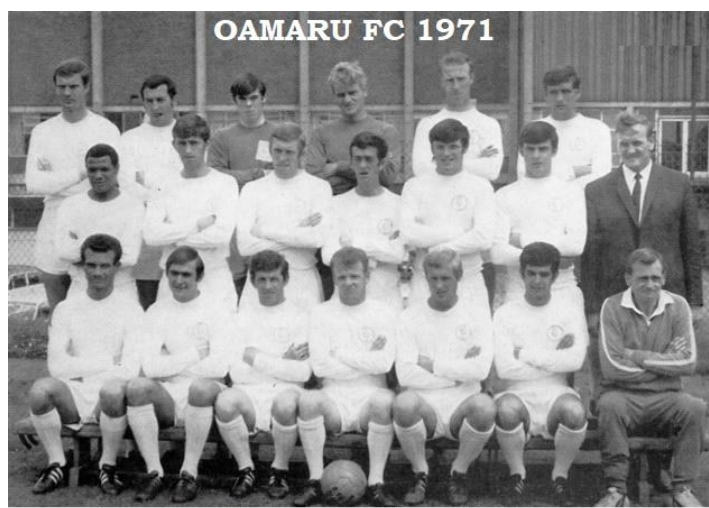
**Graffiti in Oamaru commemorating the Oamaru FC 1967-68 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup winning generation.**

analysed. Coaches like Less Cocker were also responsible for developing high fitness levels in the Oamaru players, using diets and rigorous, military style training programs.

Oamaru FC had to battle with a superb Hinjilucaya side for the Hinji title in the late 60's and early 70's. They won the title in odd years (1967,1969,1971), competing in the Nationals. Their first impact was the Inter-Cities Fair Cup title in 1968, eliminating on the way Spora of Luxembourg, the great Partizan Belgrade, Hibernian and Dundee FC of Scotland and Glasgow Rangers in the semi-final. In the double final they won the veteran Hungarian side Ferencvaros 1-0 in Oamaru and drew 0-0 in Budapest. It was the first European trophy won by a Pharonian team.

In the 1969 season they came close on winning their first National title, but they lost 4-1 to AG 1959 in Nobel and lost the title on goal difference.

What they did not manage in 1969 they achieved in 1971. Oamaru FC, led by Haak and Cosker, finished unbeaten in the Hinji Championship and went on to conquer the National Championship, their first national title and first for any Hinji club. In the final day of play, in front of more than 50,000 fans in Sootin Star Stadion, they demolished Cardenas SFC 4-1 (2 goals by Liem Nasu and 1 by Lathan Bor and Ake Sufe) and lifted the trophy on goal difference to Dynamo Pharos, as the Mandras team were held at the same time in a 2-2 draw in Holborn by Dominic. The 3 central defenders, Mot Algen, Kei Marda and Kleon Taal topped the all-star list of the league, alongside goalkeeper Sorin Remer and midfielders Liem Nasu and Ake Sufe.



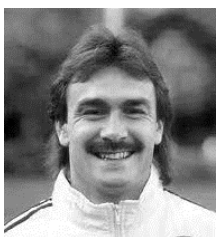
**OAMARU FC 1971**  
Top row (from left): Kei Marda, Ake Sufe, Yum Kalin, Sorin Remer, Kleon Taal, Yahim Nato. Middle row: Orum Dixyl, Stanel Molder, Asper Groon, Madi Arpit, Yahim Toren, Fenel Tersan, Jan Haak (manager). Front row: Hal Tosti, Limmar Suivala, Liem Nasu, Lathan Bor, Helnus Kobor, Mot Algen, Less Cosker (coach)

Oamaru FC with Haak as manager went on to win seven out of ten Hinji Championships in the 70's until the formation of the PSL in 1981, but they could not repeat the 1971 triumph. The highest position in the Nationals was a 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 1975.

### **PSL era, fifteen years of mediocracy 1981-95**

Jan Haak was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in May 1980. He publicly announced his illness in August of that year and made his final public appearance on 11 May 1981 at Sootin Star Stadion in a wheelchair, at a charity football match held to raise money for research into the disease. He died in Murus Hospital in Oamaru on 26 May 1982, aged 61.

Dan Bauer, the 40-year-old youth squad coach, replaced Haak. By the formation of the PSL in 1981, Oamaru was a new team, with only Orum Dixyl remaining from the 1971 title-winning side. Bauer used many players from the youth squad, with Oamaru FC averaging 22.2 years in



**Lathan Dagobert**

age, the youngest team in the League. Players like Lathan Dagobert, Helnus Marcena, Lors Horlegor, Jan Hicks, Linge Edding and Lon Vanda would become stars in the 80's. The team finished in 5<sup>th</sup> position in the first ever PSL National Championship.

Bauer stayed for 2 seasons before Lathan Devers, former National Team manager, took over in 1983, who stayed for 3 seasons with no real success. In the 1985-86 season Oamaru FC avoided relegation by only 1 point, and Devers was sacked.



**I. Schoeffer**

Former Hilvar Athletics manager Idor Schoeffer was hired in 1986.

Although signing Fenel Mertoh from Villa Town for a record fee and also strengthening the midfield line with the acquisition of Kon Peters from Chiftelov Sport, the team finished in 11<sup>th</sup> position.

In 1987-88 the PSL format changed, with a regular season in groups and play-offs. Schoeffer signed German goalkeeper Harald Schumacher from FC Koln. Oamaru finished level-top with Hilvar Athletics in their group in the regular season and reached the play-offs final, eliminating grand-favourites AG 1959 and Hilvar Athletics, only to lose to underdogs Foundation BC 1-0 in the final. Oamaru made the play-offs in all Schoeffer's seasons, until 1990 when he was let go.

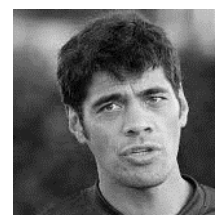


**Less Drowte**

Less «Drobo» Drowte, a former international Villa Town player who was working in the youth department of the Townsville club, was hired as first team manager in 1990. The team topped their group in the regular season, but lost in the play-offs semi-finals to favourites and eventual champions AG1959.



**Dan Bauer**



**Lors Horlegor**



**Fenel Mertoh**





**Krayl Dorian**

The season saw the emergence of 2 of the most talented players from the Oamaru youth team, center forward Krayl Dorian (who by many is considered to be the best-ever player in Pharos) and winger Ankor Grodal. Drowte's second season was not quite so good, so he resigned in 1992 to go to Dynamo Corel.



**Ankor Grodal**

Dewlat Mejners, a former Queensland Utd player and Kent Utd manager was hired in the summer of 1992, but only stayed until December with the poorest results ever for the team. He was replaced by the former Select and Hilvar Athletics experienced coach Iac Marcos, who could not save the season, with Oamaru FC out of the play-offs for the first time. Oamaru FC had another 2 disappointing seasons with Marcos, before he was sacked in mid-season 1994-95, to be replaced by 41-year-old Bale Cleise.

### **Total change in ownership, venue and staff**

#### **Bale Cleise era**



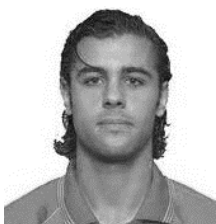
**Pr. Mijatovic**

Cleise set about building a team capable of competing in the top class. He began by bringing players through from the youth squads, like Kleon Taner, Madi Baan, Limmar Jalink and Bale Olbers. He also



**Bale Cleise**

made some key acquisitions, signing Serb star Predrag Mijatovic from Valencia, who was the 'coach' in the field for Oamaru, and defender Ivan Ludor from Victoria City. Oamaru finished on top of their group in regular season and 4<sup>th</sup> in the play-offs stage.



**Ivan Ludor**

The Belgian international libero Philippe Albert was signed next season of 1996-97, with Oamaru making the post-season top group in the changed format of the PSL Championship, finishing in 10<sup>th</sup> position.

#### **New owner**

Under chairman Peter Rids, Oamaru had taken out large loans against the prospect of the share of the TV rights and sponsorship revenues. However, they did not receive enough income to repay the loans. Tensions mounted between Rids and Cleise and, with the team underachieving chairman Rids was forced to resign and was replaced by existing non-executive director Professor Jan McKenzie. In 1997, the club was bought by GMK, a corporate recovery firm, led by businessman Kim Atan, who paid ff 100 million for a 50% stake.



**Kim Atan, Oamaru's new owner and chairman in 1997**

Kim Atan had great plans for the team. He soon bought off his colleagues in GMK and became sole owner of the firm and the club. His first move was to build a new modern stadium, since Sootin Star had become troublesome and small. He began talks with the local Hinji government and by 1999 they concluded on a deal.

### **New Stadium**

In 1997 Hinji Sports Council announced the open tender to deliver its new national stadium. Sootin Star Stadium was Oamaru's dominant feature since the 1920's. The new Oamaru FC owner and chairman Kim Atan, offered to undertake 50% of the cost of construction, with the option that the team would use the venue for the next 50 years, free of charge. At the end of 1998's, decision was made to redevelop the old stadium completely and build a new venue in the same location. Last game was played in mid-1999 and Oamaru were forced to play their home games in Hinjioamaru's Okaritas Stadion until the new venue was ready. After two years new stands for over 50,000 people were ready. Divided into three tiers of fully covered seating this stadium was among the largest in Pharos, owing its shape to architects of world-famous HOK Sport (later Populous). The stadium was named after Albert Moriori, an historic Hinji figure.



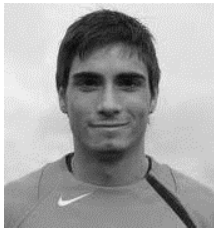
**Sootin Star Stadion before  
demolition in 1997**



**Albert Moriori Stadion, Oamaru**



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Championship title and 1<sup>st</sup> Cup



**Centron Truca**

Cleise, with Atan's financial back-up, continued to build the team. He bought defender Milo Tuma from Kent Utd for his 3-5-2 system (the one used by Jan Haak in the 60's and 70's), goalkeeper Bale Tigens from Alma Sport and promoted talented playmaker Centron Truca from the youth squads. The team was ready for greatness.

In 1999 the finished in 4<sup>th</sup> position and reached the PSC Cup final for the first time, losing 2-0 to Foundation BC.

In 2000 Oamaru won their 2<sup>nd</sup> National title, 5 points clear of their closest opponent, Champion Athletics. Anselm Libin was the league's MVP and top scorer with 26 goals.

In the next season the team was in the Champions League for the first time. Cleise did not change the team nor went on a buying spree in Europe. Oamaru progressed through the two group rounds, leaving behind great names, such as Olympic Lyon, Arsenal and Spartak

Moscow and reached the quarter-finals, losing to Valencia CF (1-0 in Oamaru and 1-3 in



**Anselm Libin**

Spain). Being pre-occupied with their European campaign, they finished as runners-up in the league behind Chiftelov Sport. However, they reached the PSC Cup final for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 3 years, this time winning the trophy, the team's 1<sup>st</sup> ever Cup, by beating Atlantic Union 1-0 in the Greenfield final from a 38-minute goal by Ador Dalnoki.



**Oamaru's players celebrate for the 2000 title in front of 20,000 visiting fans in PSL's last game against AG 1959 in Nobel (a 4-3 win)**

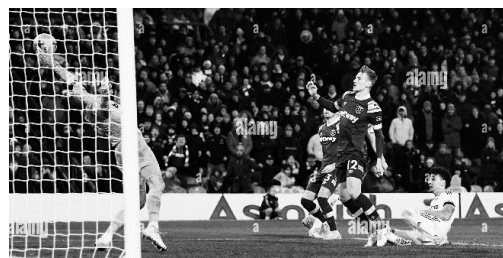
Cleise's team finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 2001-02 Championship, competing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in a row in the Champions League.

Krayl Dorian had returned to the club after an illustrious

career with Dynamo Pharos, AG 1959 and Ajax Amsterdam. Cleise also signed Dutch International star Clarence Seedorf. This time they finished in third place in their group and continued in the UEFA Cup,



**Seedorf**



**Ador Dalnoki (on the ground) scores past Atlantic Union's keeper Garvin and defenders Sobel and Leedor in the 2001 PSC Cup final**

reaching the quarter-finals, after eliminating Chelsea and Parma, losing to AC Milan. 2002-03 was another great year for Oamaru FC. They were leading the PSL table, but suffered a draw in Terminus and an unexpected defeat by Atlantic Union in Oamaru in the penultimate day of play, so they were surpassed by AG 1959 by 1 point and lost the title, despite winning their last game in Villemstad against Dalton SC.

The next season was to be the last of Bale Cleise in Oamaru. The club competed in the Champions League again, as runners-up of the PSL. They came 2<sup>nd</sup> in their group with Chelsea, Lazio and Sparta Prague, but were eliminated by AC Milan in the round of 16. With rumours of Cleise's disagreement with Atan for a new contract, due to a Foundation BC offer, the team struggled in the league and ended finally in 15<sup>th</sup> place. They managed to reach the Cup final once again, but they were thrashed by Chiftelov Sport 5-1 with fans booing the once super hero Cleise in his last game with the team.

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> century – financial problems and struggle to stay in PSL A**

Cleise finally departed in the summer of 2004 for Foundation BC, where he won the PSL title in 2006. From Cleise's departure, up to 2010, Oamaru FC would change 3 managers, one every couple of years. First it was Levi Jorden, 5 times PSL champion with AG 1959 in the past, then Arno Neuman, another AG title-winner manager and finally former player Lon Vanda. The team finished in mid-table, with a 5<sup>th</sup> place in 2009 being their best position.

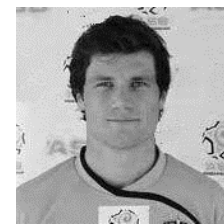


**Telos Nemat – Limmar Talahay**

Kim Atan was facing financial difficulties at the time and there were no real money for transfers. The only serious additions were in 2004 of youngsters Telos Nemat from Chiftelov Sport to replace Dorian (he would become a great scorer for the club) and winger Limmar Talahay from Dynamo Pharos and that of National

Team goalkeeper Fenel Troy from Hinjilucaya in 2009.

With Olav Neuzig as team manager in 2011, the club finished in 14<sup>th</sup> place, just 3 points above relegation zone. Former player Yol Ginger, who came after that, did not have a better time, with the team finishing again



**Fenel Troy**



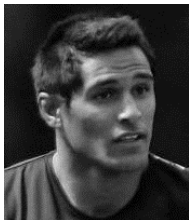
**Alex Atan**

in 14<sup>th</sup> place in 2012 and avoiding relegation on goal difference to FTK in 2013. It was the same in the next season, with Oamaru skipping relegation at the last moment, just one point clear of Alma Sport.

Fans were furious against owner Kim Atan and demanded a change. Attendances in Albert Moriori Stadion were at its lowest levels ever, averaging a little more than 20,000 tickets per game. Kim Atan decided to call it quits, after all he was already in his late 80's. His younger son, Alex Atan took over the club as new

chairman.

Alex Atan was the black ship of the Atan family, having his own career, away from family business, mainly in consulting, with dubious and controversial results. He took over in the summer of 2014, appointing former National Team, experienced manager, Dewlat Haak. He also increased by 25% all wages of footballers and staff, despite tight financing. The team surprised the Pharonian football community by finishing in 4<sup>th</sup> place, gaining a place for



**Mel Elmor**

European cups participation, but had to sell two of the team's stars, midfielders Mel Elmor to Newcastle Utd and Net Prisma to Hinjilucaya, as debt was in dangerous heights and the club was in danger of going under PSC's administration.

Haak left in the middle of 2015-16 season and Linge Hudanit took over, managing to stay in PSL A, 2 points clear of relegated Normatia

Diaspar and earning a cup-final participation, where they lost to Titania Schottegut on a penalty shoot-out. Alex Atan finally was beginning to invest some money to the club, so the situation got better in the next years, with the acquisition of both talented and



**Linge Hudanit**

experienced footballers, such as Noel Alzat, Ruel Stolars, Liono Nol, Beno Kum, Dors Rojan

and Lorn Devos. Oamaru FC started to improve dramatically, finishing in mid-table.

In 2017-18 the Hinji club won their 2<sup>nd</sup> PSC Cup by winning in extra time 1-0 vs Astrix Villemstad by a Beno Kum goal.

The team even reached 5<sup>th</sup> place in 2020, under new manager Peter Nanut and 7<sup>th</sup> place in 2022 with Nanut's replacement Stanel Jager. Jager himself was let go in



**Oamaru players celebrate the 2018 PSC Cup**

January 2023, with former international player and manager Orum Osman appointed by Alex Atan. Osman led the team until the end of 2023-24 season and was replaced by Arno Neuman.