

Taupo SC



Taupo Sport Club is a professional football club based in Taupo, Hinji, Pharos. Founded as Taupo Soccer Tornados in 1883 they changed their name to Taupo Sport Club in 1887, when they were admitted in the Southern League.

History

Formation and early years

The Taupo Soccer Tornados was formed in 1883 by Helnus Almon, who had been a student at Taupo Charter school and an apprentice with the Hinji Railway Company. The club's first documented match was in October 1883, against a scratch team brought together for the occasion by workers of the railway. Almon captained the team and scored a goal in a 2-5 defeat.

In 1887 the club merged with the Pharonian-football club Taupo Sport to become Taupo Sport Club and entered the newly formed

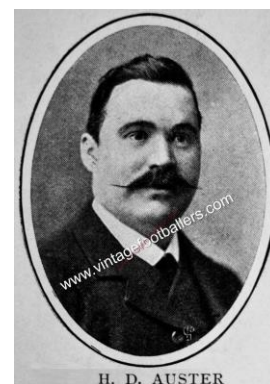


Taupo SC early crest



**Taupo SC Southern League
champions 1889-90**

Southern League. Taupo SC was one of the first teams in Pharos to appoint a manager, Homir Auster. Although finishing in the last positions of the table in the first two championships, they surprised the footballing world by winning the title in 1890.



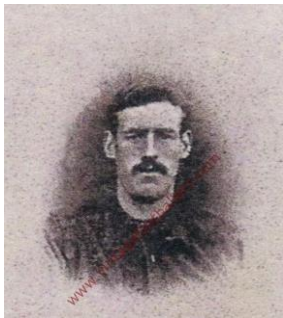
H. D. AUSTER

When the Southern League was dissolved in 1891, Taupo

SC joined the Hinji Football Association in the 1st division. They also moved from their early field in Eeting to a new venue in Fenix, in the north-eastern outskirts of Taupo, which soon became known as Fenix Grounds.



Taupo SC became Hinji champions in 1895 and 1897 and then they won 4 championships in a row from 1900 to 1903, plus another one in 1905. The team was



Thad Hispol

considered as the best team

in Pharos at that time, featuring the best footballer of the late 1890's and early 1900's, the '*Hinji Wizard of dribble*' Thad Hispol.

The team won the championship in 1910, 1912, 1916 and 1917, completing in total 11 Hinji titles until 1917, when the National Championship was established and they entered the inaugural season as Hinji's representatives, finishing in 7th place. They would compete again in 1922 as Hinji champions, finishing in the last position.



Taupo SC 1897

back row: H.D. Auster (manager), J.Turen, D.Ido, G.Galver, T.Hispol, H. Almon (secr). on bench: V.Maxel, N.Dicko, F. Kaen, A. Roert, J.Sol. on ground: J.Gover, J.Eccel



Taupo SC team in the first national Championship.

Standing: Yahim Trik (trainer), Prasne Vula, Amir Tiva, Homir Rere, Jari Soromon, Ermel Usman, Preeme Gordo, Ton Mater (manager). On the bench: Erden Lino, Fran Koroi, Sol Rotidara, Salvor Nath, Madi Matalan. On the ground: Jos Mai, Salvor Mai, Neim Mai

Financial troubles and rebirth

Taupo SC suffered financial problems around 1925, which ultimately led to the loss of the club's Football League status in 1928. "Historical Football Kits" says that, *"In 1928, having finished in mid-table, Taupo SC went into liquidation and resigned from the League. Ironically this galvanised local businessmen, the clergy (the Fenix Ground was owned by the Church of Taupo) and supporters to form a new limited company and purchase the old club's assets from Helnus Almon"*. The club also became owner of the Fenix Grounds in 1929 and a new stand was constructed shortly afterward, increasing the overall capacity of the ground to



Bale Gror



Anat Segove

25,000.

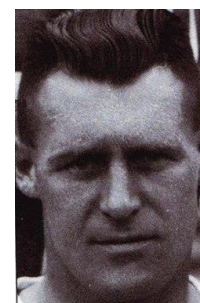
Bale Gror, a former player, was appointed manager by the new board and guided Taupo SC back to the Hinji 1st division in 1933. By 1934, the club's average attendance had risen to over 20,000, which allowed Bale Gror more transfer funds. Hinji talent were recruited from minor teams as center back Ruel Sivoki from Haina, midfielder Milo Navo from Kuiti and center forward Anat Segove from Spanish club Athletic Bilbao (Segove's mother was Pharonian



Fenix Stadion 1930's



Milo Navo



Ruel Sivoki



TAUPO SC - 1943 Hinji Champions

back row: Cly Gorm (trainer), Ruel Sivoki, Yahim Siu, Stefan Moy, Madi Chand, Bale Gror (manager). on the bench: Anat Segove, Fenel Naidu, Omer Varanalu, Seen Pole, Vidar Luma, Idris Loanvica. on the ground: Marlon Tuivona, Helnus Ragata

from Taupo). Despite this, the core of the side consisted of young local players, such as midfielder Vidar Luma, left back Seen Pole, winger Fenel Naidu and playmaker Marlon Tuivona.

Taupo SC became Hinji champions again during WWII years, in 1940, 1941 and 1943. In 1953 they won their last championship in Bale Gror's final year

before retirement and they finished in 4th position in the Nationals, their best position ever, featuring players like midfielders Idris Loanvica and Dokor Sami, goalkeeper Stefan Moy and defenders Fenel Manea and Romel Alam.

In 1955 a major renovation of the Fenix Stadion took place with a new double-tiered stand raised in the south side.



1955-1980: yo-yo years

After Gror, Arto Schaal became club manager. Taupo SC great team of the early 1950's begun to dissolve, as many players were reaching retirement ages. In 1957 the team avoided relegation to the Hinji 2nd division by 1 point. They could not prevent this in 1958 and Schaal resigned. The club's stay in 2nd division was brief, as they gained promotion the next season, but mainly due to lack of proper funding they were relegated again in 1961. Shaal's successor, Fran Tay, was unable to mount a sustained challenge for promotion, although Taupo SC came close in the 1963–64 season, missing by two points. Tay's failure to deliver promotion led to his dismissal in June 1965, after a 17th-place finish in the 1965–66 season. By that time Taupo were struggling to attract supporters to the Fenix Stadion, with the average attendance dropping below 10,000 for the first time in 40 years.

Ton Vaddin was appointed as the club's manager in June 1966. He joined the club in 1952 as



Ton Vaddin

a youth coach, before being promoted to assistant manager in 1957. In his first season in charge, 1966–67, Taupo SC finished 12th in the Second Division. Crowds were still low; a match against Aster Oamaru attracted 8,409. However, Vaddin pulled off a significant coup by enticing Idris Loanvica—now 48 years old—back to the club, 10 years after he had left. A crowd of 35,974 witnessed Loanvica's return to the club, only a fortnight after the poor crowd against Aster. The return of

Loanvica helped Taupo to rise to eighth position in 1967–68. Promotion was achieved in the next season, when Taupo SC finished as champions. In their first season back in the First Division, 1969–70, Vaddin guided Taupo SC to a mid-table finish.



48-year-old Idris Loanvica in Taupo's dressing room in 1967

Vaddin's Taupo SC won a title in 1972, a Hinji Cup, beating champions Oamaru FC 2-1 in the final. It was their first title since the 1953 Hinji Championship. They won a second cup in 1974 against Rul Katai.

The PSL era

When PSL was formed in 1981 Taupo was not awarded a position in the leagues (the 3 Hinji tickets were given to Oamaru FC, Hinjilucaya and Hinjioamaru), so they continued in the Hinji local 1st division. They were crowned Hinji champions in 1983 and again in 1985, earning their promotion to PSL's 2nd division, as they finished in 2nd place in the PSC Nationals, behind Dynamo Carbaise.

Their first season in PSL was the 1985-86 season, finishing in 12th position. They did better next season, finishing 10th, but then PSL changed its format to a closed 24-team one, so Taupo SC were back to the local Hinji League. They won the local championship title 3-times-in-a-row, from 1990 to 1992, when a financial crisis hit the club again.

The West Stand roof was blown off in a storm in January 1992. The ground damage meant the club's next home games had to be played at the smaller Taupo Lakers Stadion, which meant a significant loss of income. The repair bill, in the region of ff 250,000, put the club in financial trouble, which was eased by the sale of key players. With the team depleted, it was difficult to combat key local rivals as Hinjioamaru and Rul Katai. Vaddin, after a spell of 27 years in charge, left the club after a 1-0 home defeat in March 1993.



The damaged roof in Fenix Stadion

Taupo SC would struggle to come back on top the next years, with no major local titles until 2004, when PSL changed its format again and Taupo SC were among the 36 teams selected for the PSL, competing in the 2nd division for the 2004-05 season.

2004-2014, PSL 2nd division



Lev Kapp

Taupo SC would compete in the PSL's 2nd division for the next 10 years, without significant success, as they always finished in the bottom half of the table (there was no relegation until the 2013-14 season). They would change 6 managers (Ak Ramanujan, Fran Toran, Lori Grod, Linge Hudanit, Mot Ferin and Yol Ginger) during this era, with no one lasting more than 2 seasons. However, they produced some fine talents, such as goalkeeper Marton Marsma, defender Orum Prank, midfielder Lev Kapp and forward Fenel Jelme. They all had to be sold to other clubs.

In early 2007 the club signed an agreement with the Alken-Donellan brewery to lease the name of the stadium for a 5-year period, which was later prolonged. Thus, they solved their long-lasting financial problems.

In 2013-14, Taupo SC finished in the 17th position of the PSL B and, as PSL expanded that year, they were relegated to PSC A, the 3rd tier of the Pharonian football system. Manager Yol Ginger was let go and former Dominic player Ak Ramanujan replaced him. He had previously worked with the club from 2002 to 2004.

The Ak Ramanujan era and the new Stadium

Under Ramanujan Taupo SC tried to climb back to the PSL B, but every time they failed to win the single promotion play-off game. In 2016 they lost to Internationale, in 2017 to Aragon Gizerak and in 2018 to Albatros Helsingborg. Finally, in 2018-19 season they beat Eden Utd and Albatros and were promoted to PSL B.



Ak Ramanujan



Paragon Arena

The need to build a new stadium in Taupo became apparent in 2015, when the club received a conditional licence to play at their Fenix Stadion. First possible plots for the new venue were indicated in 2017 and the final decision was reached in 2018, when the City of Taupo donated a field in the Southern City outskirts, in exchange with the Fenix Stadium premises. Finally in July 2019 construction started.

It was planned to last a stunning 6 months only, but after 4 months building permit was revoked after residents started protesting. Then came financing problems. Finally, works could restart in January 2022 and the ground was ready by May 30th. Construction company Bremer AG used the same design of another stadium that was opened in 2011 in Monrovia, hence the extremely low cost and easy construction. It could hold 15,000 all-

seated and covered spectators, with several VIP booths. It was named Paragon Arena, with the Paragon Company of electronics helping in the construction financing, thus earning naming rights for 20 years.

Taupo finished in the 12th position in the 2019-20 season in the PSL B. Ramanujan filled the squad with players in their 30's that could not find space in the big clubs – the team's average

age was 30.2 years in 2020. He also worked with the academies, in order to produce some local talents, with Yann Bernaol being the greatest one. In 2021 the average age dropped to 27.5 and in 2022 to 25.2. During the next 2 seasons the club avoided relegation in the play-outs, beating Aragon Gizerak on penalties in 2021 and Metalx Sacralia in 2022. They did not have the same luck next season; they lost on penalties from Cardenas SFC and were relegated to PSC A, with Ak Ramanujan retiring from coaching the next summer, after failing to gain promotion, losing 2-0 to Albatros Helsinborg in the play-off game.



Yann Bernaol

Mot Ferin, who had worked again with the club came to replace him in 2023. Taupo SC finished 7th, losing the play-off spot for just one point, so he was let go, with Stanel Jager, former Oamaru FC and Hinjioamaru manager replacing him.