

PHIL HELPING TO STRENGTHEN PEEBLES

A man who has worked with the South Africa national team is currently involved with Peebles as they prepare for life in the RBS National League in 2013/14.

Originally from Aberdeen, experienced Sports Scientist and Physiotherapist Phil Mack hooked up with the Borders club for most of last season having moved back to the area.

And many of their players have talked up the work he did with them as they won a very tough RBS Championship B title in 2012/13.

Phil explained: "I have been living in the Borders for the past 15 years or so, so when I returned from South Africa with my family last November I was very keen to support a local club.

"I live close to Peebles and knowing Peter Wright from our time together at the Border Reivers it was an easy decision to join the club. After so much travelling over the past few years my family is happy to be back in Scotland and we are very settled in the Borders.

"I hope I can provide some of my experiences to help Peebles achieve their ambition to play rugby by the highest level.

"They are a really great bunch of guys, both players and staff, who are keen to improve and respond well to new ideas. I'm looking forward to working with them over this forthcoming season." As a youngster in Aberdeen Phil played



Phil Mack has a wealth of experience from around the globe

rugby at school but at that stage his main focus was athletics, mainly the 800 metres.

After school he was a commercial diver for 10 years working in some amazing places throughout the world.

He explained: "It also provided me with a lot of time to think about what comes next as I didn't want to spend my entire career away from home. "I had always been passionate about sport and rugby in particular, so I left driving to study Physiotherapy at Robert Gordon's University. I then studied Sports Science and Strength & Conditioning and spent two years with the Dallas Cowboys [American Football team] as an apprentice in Strength & Conditioning." After that Phil was working at Villager

Rugby Club in Cape Town, South Africa, when he met Alan Solomons coaching the Western Province Sevens.

"Before long I was off to Australia with the sevens team. I then returned to Scotland at the time rugby was becoming professional and joined the Border Reivers in their inaugural year. Just as I was settling into life in the Borders I was asked back to South Africa by Alan Solomons.

"I spent the next five years with Alan working through the ranks from Western Province to the Stormers and then to perhaps one of the biggest highlights of my career, the Springboks. "When Nick Mallet was unfairly pushed out of the Springboks, Alan also left and headed to Ulster. I stayed for another

Springbok tour before taking up Alan's offer to join him in Belfast."

Three successful years followed there before joining the ACT Brumbies in Australia, another huge highlight for Phil. With George Gregan they won the Super 12 in 2001.

Family commitments then brought Phil back to the UK where he joined Leicester Tigers led by Martin Johnston. He continues: "We then had just moved back to the Borders when yet another call came to return to South Africa, this time with the Southern Kings to help prepare them for Super Rugby. Now we are back and settled in the Borders.

"In terms of career highlights shaking the hand of Nelson Mandela is a moment I will always remember while being a part of winning the Super 12 with the ACT Brumbies, working Nick Mallet and the Springboks, working with the unbeaten 2001 Barbarians team and being a part of winning the Nations Cup with the Southern Kings were all great times.

"Nowadays strength and conditioning for rugby, at all levels, has become an essential and irreplaceable part. With the changes in the laws of rugby, the game has become faster with more time in play and less recovery time.

"More importantly, you cannot defend effectively unless you are fit, strong and mobile. Fitness also gives you confidence and allows a player to concentrate longer and therefore make better decisions."

ALEX MOTORING AROUND!

The SCRUM are delighted to announce that we have brought Alex Godsmark on board as Promotions and Distribution Executive.

Alex, who plays for Murrayfield Wanderers and the Pigbarians, will be out and about in our new SCRUM-branded car at rugby clubs and venues around the country making sure that everyone who should be seeing the magazine is seeing the magazine and is not missing out.

And he and the rest of the team are keen to attend as many rugby events as possible, so please contact him on alex@belljohnstone.co.uk if you would like to have us pitchside on your club's big day.



Alex Godsmark