

CAPTAINS REPORT HONG KONG AND AUSTRALIA 2010

This was a great experience for me as captain with results far and away above my wildest dreams.

We arrived in H.K. with 15 of the 17 players in the squad and we had never all played together before, when we left Cairns we were a team who had run themselves into the ground for each other. With results the club can be proud of we only came second in 1 game out of 7.

Our first get together was a bit of a huddle in Mike & Julia's hotel room to let everyone know how we hoped to give everyone an equal share of pitch time!

The first game against H.K. vets was in the ambience of the H.K. Football Club and it turned out to be Happy Valley for us, winning 2-1 in front of what could have been 150,000 spectators by the number of windows overlooking the pitch. A great start with 2 goals from the man of the match Tim Smaldon who, unfortunately, picked up an injury, and did not play again until the last match. The hospitality after the match was as 5 star as the environment, it was during the B.B.Q. that I introduced the tour trophy "the hat" which every recipient has signed to go into the museum.

We moved onto Melbourne in high spirits where the other 2 players joined us. We played both games at the Footscray H.C. what a great sight as we drove down the hill to see 2 new water base pitches either side of a very majestic club house with spectator seats on each side. Our first game against the over 65 Victoria champions started with a very spring like Bob Jameson, he had found out that he was not the eldest player on the pitch, this went to the V.Vets goalkeeper. This game turned out to be a bit of a goal fest for the A B's winning 7-1 Paul Sharrett slotting in 4 winning him man of the match, goals also for Keith Mulcock, John Peirce and Jon Beale, this being his first since his illness of 2009. Two nights later we were back again at this wonderful stadium to play a much younger side who happen to be the Aussie over 60 champions. It had been a very wet day and there were puddles on various parts of the pitch a challenge for both sides.

AB's put in a tremendous team effort despite going a goal down came back to win 2-1. M of M was very difficult with such sterling work by Richard Boutcher in goal, Bob Grenside in mid field but the voting was tied between Balbir Singh for his domination of the opposition circle and Clive Kendall at the other end for his control of our 25yd area the casting vote going to Clive. The both games were followed by hospitality from the home sides rounding off our visit.

Across to the Island State of Tasmania and Hobart for the next 2 games, another of our youngsters was showing signs of wear and it was obvious we were not to over use Paul Sharrett for him to last the campaign. Our host the Wombats H C had been passed some inside information from Victoria and were reselecting their sides a bit and it was to be a night for our defence to show its worth. Richard was again in the thick of it but the outstanding man for the night was German Singh in front of him who won M of M. for the way he marshalled the defence

Great credit should also go to Bob Jameson's efforts against a much younger player. The mid field of Russell Gates and Colin Newman, who at the end due to their efforts were showing marked effidence of fatigue; Dudley Walker came up with his cameo bit and scored our lone goal. Despite all the great effort put in by the team we were to come second for the only game of the tour, going down 2-1

Two nights later with some useful awareness of our opposition we were again at the Tasmanian H.C. but the Wombats had some even younger looking players. It was to be the night for the midfield with Colin Newman, Tim Mobbs and Bob Grenside making some amazing interceptions and the forwards having to all help back. But the star for the night was to be Richard in goal and we all deserve to feel we had a winning 0-0 draw and Richard being a unanimous M. of M. I think we did not concede a short corner. After the game we were presented with a very nice wooden shield from the Wombats club for our club exhibition.

Back North to Sydney in high spirits but with many more aches and pains, the blue print plan of Messer's Greenhough and Perryman was looking a little shell shocked. Russ having stayed on in Tasmania, John Butler and Peter Terleski who had both taken a game out in Hobart to ably umpire for us soon showed the advantage of a rest against a very well organised Sydney Vets. team. John's steady experience in mid field and Peter running up front helped steady the side. A little unlike the norm for an AB's side there was some dialogue going on between players and the officials reflecting the commitment of the side.

With the ability of one of the opposition and the need of the hour the captain was spoken to by an official for sledging a fitter and more skilled centre forward successfully off his game. Sydney scored first but a great individual effort by Keith Mulcock earning us another draw and him the M of M award. The day was rounded off with a very good supper in the club house.

Townsville our final destination and the Ashes to play for, hot and humid very different to all the previous matches. Jon Beal stayed on in Sydney, Russ rejoined us and with Tim Smalden going to play a part as well we were in pretty good fettle for the end of a tour. Townsville put out a fairly evenly aged team so all set for a good game but we had a trump card up our sleeve with Mike Greenhough taking the field for part of the game. From the start we seem to be taking control of the game until we gifted away 2 goals but showing the team spirit we had generated over the tour we fought back and 2 fine goals from Paul and 1 from Tim Smaldon. These 2 almost won us the game in the dying moments after our host's scored an equaliser. Richard played a huge part in goal again helping us to claw back the deficit and was awarded M of M. he also received a most unusual M of M award from Townsville. 3 all draw, we did try and claim a result on away goals but it was not to be and the Ashes remain on the other side of the world.

Chris Kitto controlled the 5 games he did for us in his normal unassuming way and it was very good of John & Peter to cover for him in Hobart.

Last but not least thanks to our lovely lady supporters for all the various needs required on such a tour, their voting after each match for the player award and of course the vocal support.

The tour awards and/mementoes were given out at the dinner on Green Island re-named Rain Island by most.

7 games, 3 wins 3 draws and 1 lost

16 goals for 8 against

6 different names on the score sheet

Sharp shooter of tour Paul Sharrett

Player of the tour Richard Boutcher

And finally a very special thanks from me to Mike Greenhough for his match manger support on the pitch for every game. Also for allowing me to use his credibility at times allowing the whole trip to go as well as it did.

I am very proud to have played with you all.