

the hardwrap

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  Touch Football AUSTRALIA

ISSUE 10 • SEPTEMBER 2012



TOUCH FOOTBALL TAKES OFF!



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OF
ORIGIN**





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The Australian Sports Commission is the Australian Government agency that develops, supports and invests in sport at all levels in Australia. Touch Football Australia has worked closely with the Australian Sports Commission to develop touch football from community participation to high-level performance.

Touch Football Australia is one of many national sporting organisations that has formed a winning partnership with the Australian Sports Commission to develop its sport in Australia.

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acknowledgments



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CLASSIC TOUCH
SIZE: Senior



MIGHTY TOUCH
SIZE: Senior, Junior

MEGA TOUCH
SIZE: Senior



a message from the CEO



Welcome to the tenth edition of the Touch Football Australia (TFA) Hard Wrap magazine.

The magazine was created to deliver news from across all the states to the Touch Football community. This edition coincides with the 2012 National Youth Championships (NYC) which returns to Port Macquarie, New South Wales. We take this opportunity to thank the Port Macquarie Hastings Council as well as the continued support of the NSW Government through our strategic partnership with Destination NSW.

The 2012 National Youth Championships will be presented with the return of the State of Origin Touch Football Series contested by traditional rivals New South Wales and Queensland. This series was introduced in the 1990's and has continued to evolve.

The latest edition compliments the revamped elite direction for the sport including internationals and the Elite Eight Series. The presentation of these products on pay television has been well received and the recent Trans Tasman Series conducted in the outstanding Mudgee facility has been telecast both domestically and abroad. The results of this exposure mean that the Australian player base and indeed our product is being presented as the showcase for our sport across the globe.

The State of Origin will compliment this direction. The rivalry between these proud states will be something to witness and we look forward to what will be a hotly contested series across all divisions. I can think of no better place to showcase such an event than in front of the future of our sport. With both legends of the past and the current crop on display, our up-and-coming juniors will be able to learn from some of the best our nation has to offer.

The National Youth Championships will

continue to evolve in coming years with various initiatives being implemented to ensure its ongoing success as the pinnacle of junior participation domestically. The unique relationship we have with the Australian School System and the ongoing support from them for the development of our game is deeply appreciated by our entire community.

On behalf of the Board of TFA, I wish all players, coaches, referees and administrators involved in this event every success. We are sure there will be fierce competition followed by the interaction accustomed with our sport which is both social and friendly.

The next six months are extremely exciting with this event followed by the Super Trans Tasman, the Elite Eight and the National Touch League (NTL). This puts extra incentive on this event given sound performance will result in international representation. In particular we wish the referee contingent and the Panel all the best and welcome the newcomers to the National Youth Championships.

Having all enjoyed the recent London Olympic Games it is clear that all sports need to strive for ongoing success and innovation in order to stay at the top. TFA has enjoyed unrivalled success over the existence of our sport; however, we must continue to look at how we can be better, get more out of the game and

indeed then realise the on-field success that we have come to expect.

We must continue to innovate and work at all levels in a unified manner if we are to achieve this success as a sport which is focussed on growth as well as the trophies or rewards we pursue at these events. The balance therefore of participation outcomes and High Performance achievement will be a question that is asked not only in our sport but throughout all sports.

Our Participation Plan has guided the organisation to significant gains in the

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EDITOR: LAUREN PRITCHARD

ART DIRECTOR: TIM LANE

DESIGN & LAYOUT: WOOSHCREATIVE.COM

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first 12 months of existence and we believe it has also ensured there is clarity in our direction. The High Performance objectives have also remained strong with the development of the new plan enhanced by the performance of our next generation at the 2012 Trans Tasman where we again retained all three divisions. I wish to congratulate all involved in this event including our partner Touch New Zealand.

Already as a result of the Olympics there have been reviews announced as well as the general observation of change in governance models in some of our most iconic sports such as Cricket, Rugby League and Rugby Union to better position those entities. There have been various reviews into sport performance which can often uncover various issues or concerns but more often than not only after performance diminishes.

As a sport we have tried to stay ahead of the curve with these matters and we must continue to set challenging objectives for ourselves in order to not only achieve success or measures of it, but maintain relevance in a crowded market.

There is no doubt it is challenging but we firmly believe the sport is on the right track on so many levels in Australia. We must have strong collaborative

relationships within our own network, sound external partnerships and a sense of responsibility for our international partners to ensure we are all progressing together.

I am certain that the current era will be viewed as one that challenged the status quo and may even have some teething issues; however, it is clear that the revamped structures will not only challenge our athletes to perform better but will deliver more profile for the sport to a larger participant base.

The leadership position envisaged and therefore embraced is to ensure we continue to develop as a sport and achieve our own expectations. Just like the results of the Olympics or the other profile sports (including our own passionate support of domestic competitions or teams) our expectations are always high.

We will not only judge ourselves at an elevated level but we have lofty expectations of success for our sport. While this is an admirable position we must ensure the expectation is benchmarked against a challenging yet achievable level.

The final piece to the puzzle will be that we are all contributing positively to the

outcome. As with the State of Origin, Trans Tasman, Elite Eight, NTL or even local competition we can embrace the rivalry on the field knowing that it must all contribute to the expectation we have for our sport's success.

Thank you to our ongoing sponsors and partners. TFA has established a great relationship with various parties that support the overall development of our game. We encourage all members of the Touch Football community to show your support to them at this event and into the future.

Finally, I would like to recognise the support of the TFA Board of Management and staff, both in the national office and in state and regional locations, for all their efforts in delivering this great sport to the affiliates and members across the country.

Our sport continues to benefit from the commitment of all concerned and we are in safe hands for the future if we can retain them all. We look forward to seeing all of you through the upcoming summer season enjoying the thrill of competition or simply the opportunity to participate with friends and family.

Colm Maguire
Chief Executive Officer



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**Destination
NSW**



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES

On behalf of the NSW Government it is my pleasure to welcome you to Port Macquarie for the 2012 X-Blades National Youth Championships and State of Origin.

These events will see some of the nation's best Touch Football players take to the fields of Port Macquarie on the beautiful mid North Coast of NSW. With its idyllic climate and setting and a variety of outdoor activities on offer, Port Macquarie provides a fitting backdrop for these exciting events.

Running in conjunction with the Youth Championships, the State of Origin Touch will add much anticipated excitement, reigniting the rivalry between New South Wales and Queensland.

These events are part of a Touch Football event package developed on behalf of the NSW Government by Destination NSW, with several National Touch League events held in regional NSW in the lead up to the Touch Football World Cup in 2015. Hosted by NSW, the Touch Football World Cup will attract interstate and international teams and visitors to the State.

Like many regional events on the annual NSW Events Calendar, this line-up of Touch Football events helps to attract visitors and deliver economic benefits to NSW regional communities.

I wish all players the best of luck and visitors a great time in Port Macquarie.

**NSW DEPUTY PREMIER
ANDREW STONER**

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Coffs Harbour To Host 2013 & 2014 NTL events

Touch Football Australia announced in May that the 2013 and 2014 X-Blades National Touch League events will return to BCU International Stadium in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales.

Coffs Harbour won the right to host the events after an extremely competitive tender process which included many submissions from across New South Wales.

The NTL was previously held in Coffs Harbour from 1997 to 2008, with Member for Coffs Harbour, Andrew Fraser, saying the announcement was great news for the city.

"I am proud Coffs Harbour has been chosen to host the National Touch League in 2013 and 2014. It is very exciting to be part of the journey towards the 2015 Touch Football World Cup," Mr Fraser said.

"These national events will generate a huge buzz for the town, with spectators, participants, family and friends no doubt keen to enjoy the competition, speed and agility of Touch Football."



Shuker In Sporting Heroes Exhibition

Some of former Australian Men's Open captain, Gavin Shuker's sporting achievements are currently on display in the 'Sporting Heroes - Legends Of Sport From Central Queensland' exhibition at the Rockhampton Art Gallery.

Shuker joins Olympic Gold Medal winning cyclist, Anna Meares, five time world Hockey player of the year, Jamie Dwyer and Tennis great, Rod Laver in the exhibition, which runs until Sunday, 7 October 2012.



LaCaze Competes at the London Olympics

Former Queensland Women's 20's State of Origin representative, Genevieve LaCaze, was a member of the Australian Olympic team that recently competed at the 2012 London Olympics.

LaCaze competed in the 3000 metre Steeplechase at the Games and did a personal best time of nine minutes and 37 seconds, a three second PB, finishing ninth in her heat.

She is pictured here playing for the 2006 Under 18's Nationals winning Queensland Secondary Schools Touch (QSST) team.



TFA Photo Competition

Do you fancy yourself as an avid photographer? Would you like your photography to appear in some of Touch Football Australia's promotional material? Then this is the competition for you.

Touch Football Australia (TFA) is searching for social images from affiliates across the country that epitomise what our sport is all about.

Whether they are great action shots, team shots or just you and your friends having fun playing Touch Football, then this is your chance to get your photos seen.

The best 10 photos will be in the running to win prizes including X-Blades boots, KooGa playing gear and BodyScience compression gear.

For more information, please visit the TFA website - www.austouch.com.au



Vote For Our Sportswomen

There are several competitions currently running to recognise sportswomen in Australia and TFA is encouraging you to vote for some of our fantastic Women's players and officials to make the list.

Sport For Women is compiling its Top 100 Australian Sportswomen of all time and there are already a number of Touch Footballers on the list. To vote, please visit the Sport For Women website - www.sportforwomen.com.au

Women's Health Magazine is also calling for nominations for the 'I Support Women In Sport' Awards, to be held in Sydney in November.

To vote for our female athletes, please visit the Women's Health Magazine website - <http://au.lifestyle.yahoo.com/womens-health>

Colm Takes Part In CEO Sleep Out

Touch Football Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Colm Maguire, braved a very cold Canberra night outside in June when he took part in the St Vincent de Paul Society's 2012 CEO Sleep Out.

More than 1,000 CEO's from across Australia took to the pavement in their respective capital cities for the night. While the final tallies are still being calculated for the 2012 event, Colm raised \$3,000, which is a fantastic effort.

Despite the below par temperatures, slight rain and having only three sheets of cardboard and a sleeping bag for the night, Colm says it 'was one night he'll not soon forget' and wishes to thank the Touch Football community for their contributions to the cause.

"It was memorable not because of the rain or cold, which was certainly a talking point, but through the goodwill and difference you were making to people that truly need help," Maguire said.

"Touch Football Australia supports various causes surrounding raising funds for the homeless and to feel that you have now personally experienced it is rewarding and enlightening. I truly appreciate the way our community has got behind me and I thank everyone that supported me."



Alliance Name Coaches for 2013 Elite Eight Series

The Alliance has named its head coaches for the 2013 Elite Eight Series to be played in conjunction with the 2013 X-Blades National Touch League in Coffs Harbour in March.

Australian Men's Open assistant coach and Australian Men's 20's coach, Paul Sfeir, will continue in his role of Alliance Men's Open coach while 2011 New South Wales Country Mavericks Women's Open coach, Nick Smith, will coach the Alliance Women's Open team.



Stay tuned to the TFA website for all of the latest news and information in the lead up to the 2012 Elite Eight Series.

Rebels Finish Second In KooGa Relentless Competition

Congratulations to the Sydney Rebels, who recently finished second in the KooGa Relentless video competition.

The Sydney Rebels finished on top of the public voting following the four and a half month competition to progress through to the final following fantastic support from the Touch Football community. The top five public entries and KooGa's top five entries went into the finals, which were voted on by all nine of KooGa's pro team coaches, including Robbie Deans, Michael Voss, Craig Bellamy and Ewen McKenzie.

Despite just missing out on first prize, which was \$30,000 of KooGa kit, the Rebels did a fantastic job to get so far in the competition. TFA would like to congratulate the Rebels on their efforts.



The Challenge Of Coaching... Lovett!

It is often thought to succeed in sport at the highest level, as an athlete or a coach, you need to be located where the heart of the game is, which for Touch Football is often New South Wales or Queensland as is reflected with the State of Origin series. There is, however, always an exception to the rule.

Australian Mixed Open coach, Micheal Lovett is proof that it doesn't matter where you are from, if you are willing to put in the hard work you can reach your goals and that the strong network of coaches and people within the Touch Football community are always willing to assist.

Lovett was appointed the head coach of the Mixed Open team for the 2012 Trans Tasman Series, his first head coach role at this level, with his side defeating New Zealand two games to one.

Lovett started his Touch Football career in his home town of Orange and completed a Level One coaching course to learn a bit more about the game. After moving to Melbourne, he decided to become more involved in coaching. Lovett's first National Touch League (NTL) experience was as an assistant coach for the former NTL Permit Crusaders Women's 30's team in 2001, with the philosophy that it was a great place to 'cut his teeth' and learn from people who had played the game extensively.

While his Crusaders team finished fifth, Lovett was inspired by another Crusaders team, coached by Touch Football Australia Hall of Fame member, Garry Lawless, which went through the competition undefeated. Lovett then made contact with Lawless who became a very valuable mentor.

"I wrote him a letter saying 'you seem to know what you are doing and I wouldn't mind being a part of learning what you do and how you do it'. The following year I became his assistant coach. I worked with him for a period of time in the seniors to cut my teeth and that sort of experience got better and I enjoyed it," Lovett said.

Lovett went on to become an assistant coach at the 2005 Youth World Cup for the Australian 20's Boys team before becoming the team's coach for the 2009 Youth Trans Tasman Series. While initially named as the assistant coach, another person's misfortune became Lovett's gain, being promoted to the head coach

role in the lead up to the tournament, taking the opportunity with both hands.

"The initial coach got a promotion at work and was

unable to complete the preparation so I was initially appointed as assistant coach...then I was promoted to the Head Coach position."

2009 also saw Lovett become one of the assistant coaches to Australian Women's Open coach, Kerry Norman and he was involved in the 2009 and 2010 Trans Tasman Series events and the 2011 World Cup. Lovett says he learnt plenty of things from Norman and fellow assistant coach, Dean Russell that have helped him in his current role as Mixed Open coach.



"They are great role models for the sport and they are passionate about the Women's program and their record and how dominant that team has been. I also learnt a lot from Dean about what it means to represent your country, he's very passionate about that."

The 2012 Trans Tasman Series saw Lovett debut as a head coach at the Open level, and while it was a difficult challenge with nine debutants and a short preparation time, the team impressed, taking out their series on day three of the competition.

"There were a lot of new players and new faces and even though I've coached a

few of them before at Youth level, playing Open's was a different story. The team was led by the two captains and the on-field leadership shown by a few new faces at that level, they've got some quality in them and you'll probably see them play Men's and Women's Open in the future," Lovett said.

The Series was memorable for many reasons for Lovett, with his family in the crowd to watch him coach, while fellow Victorian Leah Percy also debuted for the Australian Women's Open team.

"I started coaching Leah when she was 17 and we blooded her as a captain at that young age as co-captain alongside another senior player that has had a lot to do with her development. To see her come through the pathway from Crusaders to the Alliance to now the Aussie Women's Open, seeing her get that far, she's our first Victorian representative at an Open's level, so it's nice."

Lovett says that while his head coaching role has been many years in the making, it is rewarding to see that his hard work has paid off, especially being a coach from a developing state.

"I think it's a reflection where if you are willing to do the hard work and travel and learn and get associated with quality people who are willing to share knowledge, then the opportunity is there. It's not easy but it's a great thrill to be able to get that far and secondly to get a win in my first series. There was a lot of stuff we could have easily blamed if we didn't win but when the times got tough the players really dug in."

Lovett's next challenge will be retaining the Trans Tasman Mixed Open title in the 2013 Super Trans Tasman Series in Auckland, New Zealand in February next year.

Lovett hopes he can continue in the Open's program as a coach for many years to come, with the 2015 World Cup a goal high on his list.

"It's going to be a massive challenge, playing New Zealand on their home soil. There's not a lot of travel for them so they will be picking their best teams they've got available and it's right in the middle of their season. I expect there will be a big difference to the side that we played in April."

"For me to do the World Cup on home soil and maintain our ranking for the number one country would be pretty important to myself and obviously that's linked to us winning the Mixed division and developing the players through to the Men's and Women's and also from the Youth program coming through."

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Please note that events are subject to change or cancellation (check relevant website for further details prior to the event). Destination NSW acknowledges and appreciates all photographic images supplied by each event owner for use in this advertisement.

STATE OF ORIGIN RETURNS

It's been off the radar for four years, but one of Touch Football's favourite events has returned to the calendar in 2012.

It is state against state and mate against mate where Australian teammates oppose each other and rivalries between Wests and Canterbury in New South Wales and Sharks and Cobras in Queensland are temporarily forgotten for the good of their respective states.

Four years is a long time in Touch Football. Back in 2008:

- a Trans Tasman Test Series had not been played since 2002;
- South West Queensland was unable to compete at the National Touch League in the Open divisions;
- Just over 50 percent of the 2012 Open's Origin players were 20 years of age or under;

The 2012 State of Origin series will see New South Wales and Queensland's representative teams battle it out across 13

divisions at the Port Macquarie Regional Sports Stadium on Friday, 21 September and Saturday, 22 September 2012, being held in conjunction with the 2012 X-Blades National Youth Championships.

New South Wales has held the edge over Queensland since the series was introduced 17 years ago, with New South Wales winning six series titles and Queensland winning three.

The series commenced in 1995 and was held in conjunction with the 1995 New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) State Cup in Port Macquarie.

Prior to this, New South Wales and Queensland met once a year as part of the old National Championships framework, meeting in the finals of all divisions of the event since its inception in 1980.

2012 will see New South Wales vying for its fourth consecutive State of Origin Series title, having won the 2004, 2006 and 2008 events, while Queensland will be out to claim its first Origin series title in a decade, having last won in 2002.

STATE OF ORIGIN RESULTS

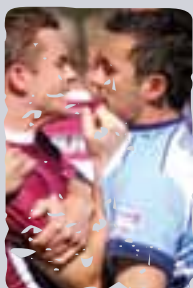
YEAR	CHAMPIONS	VENUE
2008	NEW SOUTH WALES	SYDNEY
2006	NEW SOUTH WALES	BRISBANE
2004	NEW SOUTH WALES	SYDNEY
2002	QUEENSLAND	BRISBANE
2001	NEW SOUTH WALES	WOLLONGONG
1999	NEW SOUTH WALES	GOLD COAST
1998	NEW SOUTH WALES	BRISBANE
1996	QUEENSLAND	PORT MACQUARIE
1995	QUEENSLAND	PORT MACQUARIE

MOST ORIGIN CAPS

MELISSA PITFIELD (NSW)	23
KRISTY JUDD (NSW)	22
SHARYN WILLIAMS (QLD)	22
AMANDA JUDD (NSW)	21
RICK BORG (REFEREE)	20
GAVIN SHUKER (QLD)	20
JAMIE STOWE (NSW)	20

LEADING TOUCHDOWN SCORERS

JAMIE STOWE (NSW)	19
AMANDA JUDD (NSW)	12
ADAM FAHIM (NSW)	11
GAVIN SHUKER (QLD)	10
ANTHONY ZIADE (NSW)	10
CHRIS FARROW (QLD)	9
SCOTT NOTLEY (QLD)	9
BEN ROBERTS (QLD)	9
BEN ROBINSON (QLD)	9



ORIGIN MOMENTS

With the 2012 State of Origin Series now upon us, The Hard Wrap caught up with some of the greats of State of Origin to find out what their favourite memories have been throughout the years.

JAMIE STOWE NSW - 20 CAPS

Playing Origin in some ways can be the most testing form of our sport. You are teamed with guys you play against week in and out, that itself was testing as some sides had great rivalry. Also playing against some of your Australian teammates can bring the best out in athletes. I've seen the best Touch players from (Mark) Boland to (Dylan) Hennessey and it's great to play with the differing styles and eras.

My favourite State of Origin moment would have been representing New South Wales for the first time. It was in 1995 after losing to Queensland in the Nationals we played them in the inaugural State of Origin in Port Macquarie in December. We had a young side and they were littered with Aussie players and future Aussie players. There was so much hype, the games were televised and it was played at New South Wales State Cup so there was a large crowd. Queensland came out and were quite physical in the first game which we lost, the next game resulted in an all in brawl and Queensland taking the title. An initiation I'll never forget.

PHIL GYEMORE QLD - 18 CAPS

I was fortunate enough to make my debut for Queensland in the Men's Open division on the Gold Coast in 1999. Although we lost the series the whole experience was fantastic. Representing your state is a huge reward for your efforts however it simply gives you the motivation to work even harder in your training to ensure that you can step up to the next level.

Some of the highlights from my State of Origin experiences include:

- Winning the 2002 Men's Open State of Origin series in Brisbane 3-0. This included winning a game 10-4;
- Winning the 2006 Men's Open State of Origin series;
- Being able to play every State of Origin game with Gavin Shuker;
- Being able to play for Queensland when Daniel Withers was making his debut for the maroons in Men's Open;
- Playing in the same Queensland team as Michael Devonshire makes his debut in.

Some of the many things that I'm looking forward to in the 2012 State of Origin series will be:

- Watching Dave Zanette and Trevor Moran make their debuts for Queensland Men's Open;
- Seeing my wife play in her first State of Origin series;
- Playing against Garry Sonda. He always plays with plenty of spirit and passion.



PHIL GYEMORE

GISELLE MARTIN NSW - 11 CAPS

For all the years I played state, from under 20's and Open's, to never be beaten by Queensland.

In 1998, Kristy Judd and I thought we needed to introduce Erin Turner to New South Wales culture. We told Erin she had to do a TV interview in her dress uniform at 3pm. She couldn't be late and she needed to meet the camera crew outside the hotel on the street. They supposedly wanted to interview her and ask her what it was like being one of the new girls in the team.

With not much hesitation Erin believed us, got dressed and made her way downstairs to meet the TV crew. We had the Women's and Men's New South Wales Open teams on the balcony of the hotel watching Erin in her dress uniform on the street waiting for the TV interview which never happened. I will never forget her face when she looked up and saw the teams on the balcony and realised there was no TV crew and no interview.

KRISTY JUDD NSW - 22 CAPS

I don't know where it was but I remember watching New South Wales versus Queensland games when I had just started High School, I think it may have been at Southport in Queensland and hoping one day that might be me running around for New South Wales. I always looked up to those girls like Giselle Martin, Janine Hinds and Paula Vassallo.

I remember the first time I played it was filmed for television in 1995 and that was a big deal, it was on at Port Macquarie and ran alongside the State Cup competition.

Lipton Ice was on board as the major sponsor so everyone was really excited.

PAT GREHAN QLD - 8 CAPS

Undoubtedly my most memorable moments were the inaugural State of Origin in 1995. Being selected as a member of the Queensland Men's Open team that year was a massive thrill and also a great challenge. It was the first elite tournament played under the six-a-side format and was a massive challenge and an even bigger mindset change. We were well established at national level in the seven-a-side game having won a number of National Championships but the new concept was very different.

We were up against a very fast New South Wales team led by Mark Boland and Jimmy Marinos and a lot of people expected us to be blown off the park due to New South Wales' superior speed. We had stuck with our very successful Queensland team with the experience of blokes like Scott Notley, Bob Brindell, Craig Pierce and a sprinkle of youth in Trent McDonald, Brenton O'Shannessy and Craig Madders. We developed a great game plan of quick and expansive ball movement and had developed a very effective six-a-side defensive policy. Our defensive policy became the norm for years to come in the new format. We played only two games that year and won both of them very convincingly with some great touchdowns and a very expansive game which thrilled the big crowd.

Most of us went on to play in, and win, the 1996 State of Origin series 3-0, so in the first two years of the State of Origin concept Queensland Men's Open were undefeated. I later coached the Men's Open with a great mate, Ash Heiniger in 2002 and we won the series 3-0 in Brisbane. At the moment my State of Origin record as a player and coach stands at eight wins and no losses. It would be great to keep that record intact but I am sure Mark Boland and the New South Wales team will have something to say about that. You can only dream I suppose!

RICK BORG REFEREE - 20 CAPS

The State of Origin game that stands out for me was held in Port Macquarie in December 1996.

We had a meeting prior to the series beginning for all referees, captains and coaches as we were invited to listen to Richard Scotts (Media Manager appointed by the Australian Touch Association for the State of Origin series). It was the first time the ATA had secured a deal for television rights through their major sponsor Lipton Ice. The meeting went really well and he stated to us that he wanted to encourage passion in the game as he wanted it to be a spectacular event to gain a wider audience to watch elite Touch on TV.

The next day we arrived at the stadium full of nerves and very excited. New South Wales were attacking the Queensland line after a great passage of play by the Blues. There was a change of possession and Queensland had the ball five metres out from their own score line. Queensland proceeded to drive the ball up field gaining many metres. I then witnessed three aggressive drives/touches on the sideline closest to me. On the third drive two players from New South Wales and Queensland came together.

Well you would have thought the fireworks for New Years Eve had arrived very early in Port Macquarie. We saw an all-in from the players on the field, the subs in the sub boxes as well coaches and managers becoming involved. It went on for several minutes. There was a player from Queensland not even knowing he was at Port Macquarie after the fight I was told it went around world to like 12 different countries. Boy oh boy I have never seen anything like it in my 25 years of refereeing.

GAVIN SHUKER OLD - 20 CAPS

My three favourite moments are my debut, the Brisbane second game victory in 2002 and the 2006 Origin. My Men's Open Origin debut was in 1998. We lost by one the first match. I got called up into the second match and it was the quickest match I had experienced in my life. We won the series two games to one. To play with some of the greats of the game in (Scott) Notley and (Bob) Brindell is something I will treasure.

The 2002 Origin game two was the most I have felt that Queensland destroyed a side. We played a running style that was based off the Crushers-Brisbane style of play that when them many games and lost them plenty at the National Touch League (NTL) as well. I always felt this style of play was better off in a three game series rather than an 11 game NTL where your legs ran out.

That day after our two hard calls we ran and ran with switch after switch, promoting the ball that ended up in a 10-4 scoreline.

This was a different 10-4. I saw people physically not able to keep up. The way the game is played now you just don't see people physically struggling like that. Gaz (Garry) Sonda still talks about how hard this game was and you know if he says that, it was full on.

The last one was the 2006 series. We had a game plan that worked so well. We shut everything thrown our way middles-based and by the third game New South Wales had adjusted but it was too late we had won the series. Captaining a home series was very special.



GARRY SONDA

STEVE ROBERTS NSW - 15 CAPS

1. In 1996 when the State Of Origin was played at the New South Wales State Cup in front of a capacity crowd and the fight broke out. Not that I condone fighting, however, you could see the passion in both the teams;

2. Making my Men's Open Origin debut with my brother Paul Forrester in the same side. Unfortunately we lost the series but it was great being a part of it with him;

3. Winning the series in 2008;

4. I've made some great mates playing Touch Football, some of which are from north of the border. I have become good mates with the likes of Nathan Jones, Drummy (Drumayne Dayberg-Muir), Dan Withers and Shukes (Gavin Shuker) but whenever New South Wales and Queensland compete there is a fierce rivalry. We are all passionate about the colours we wear!

SHARYN WILLIAMS OLD - 22 CAPS

My favourite Origin moment was in 1999 when Queensland won the Women's Open series at the Gold Coast.

It went to a drop-off and was three on three when Cath Bell did a great dive and touched Debbie Knapp in the corner to stop her scoring. After that we scored at the other end and won the Origin.

LOUISE WINCHESTER NSW - 15 CAPS

I love Origin, to me it is the toughest Touch Football I have had the privilege of playing. It's the best of the best.

1999 was my first State of Origin. I was lucky enough to play with some of the best female Touch Football players ever. I was in absolute awe of them and it was a privilege to play alongside them.

I also remember fondly the 2004 series when we won against Queensland. We were coached by Wayne 'Max' Bambury and I learnt a lot from Max in that particular series. But I must say what I remember most was our celebrations on our return. We had so much fun.

I would have to say my favourite Origin moment was the 2006 series. It was the toughest series I have played in. We ended up winning that series and it was made even more special as it was Melissa 'Pitty' Pitfield's final series, so to send her off on a winning note and on Queensland turf was something that I'll always remember.

GARRY SONDA NSW - 17 CAPS

The all-in brawl in 1996 was obviously an event that received a lot of media coverage and made people aware of our sport even if it wasn't for the right reasons.

My two favourite memories are winning the series for the first time on the Gold Coast in 1999 and captaining New South Wales to a three-nil clean sweep in 2004.

MARK BOLAND NSW - 17 CAPS

I was lucky enough to come from a background where I played in a lot of Nationals where New South Wales got to play against all of the other states. I was one of the real lucky ones where I got to do all of that before Origin started, before they realised that all of the finals were being New South Wales and Queensland anyway and the costs were getting so much. So whilst it wasn't new to us, it was new to us that Origin concept, where we knew we were going to be playing Queensland, previously there might have been an upset and we might have played ACT in a grand final, but it never happened. The concept of knowing you were going to play Queensland for a grand final, it built it up for a lot longer and our feelings were, six-a-side, we had so many fast players, that we were going to wipe them. I don't know how many years it was until we did win one, because they proved speed really didn't have a lot to do with it, it had more to do with being really good footballers, that's what they were.



Australia Wins The 2012 Trans Tasman Series

The Australian Touch Football teams impressed on and off the field in Mudgee during the 2012 Trans Tasman Series in April.

The Men's, Women's and Mixed teams did Australia proud as they took to the new Glen Willow Regional Sporting Complex on the week of ANZAC Day, competing against fierce rivals New Zealand.

With a large turnover in both the Australian Mixed and Women's Open teams since last year's World Cup title win, both divisions were pushed to the third game to decide the titles, with Australia coming up trumps, winning both divisions 2-1 on an exciting last day.

With 12 players from last year's World Cup returning for the 2012 Trans Tasman Series, the Australian Men's Open team continued its dominance against the Kiwis, taking out all three games,

including an impressive 11-3 win on the final day of competition.

And while the teams did Australia proud on the field, they were also great ambassadors for the sport off it, making the most of Mudgee's interest in the series, gaining plenty of support during the week.

Several members of the Australian contingent braved an early start on ANZAC Day to attend the dawn service, before backing up to march in Mudgee's ANZAC Day Parade behind proud Australian flag bearers, Gary Rose, Steve Roberts and Kylie Hilder.

There was also plenty of interaction with the younger members of the region, with school visits and clinics being put on during the series. And the players seemed to have as much fun as the kids, teaching them plenty about the sport of Touch Football.

Touch Football Australia Board Member and Mudgee Touch Association Treasurer, Jim Yeo told the Australian contingent at the final presentation about the legacy the teams left on the town of Mudgee during the event.

"We have absolutely loved having you in our town, we'd love for you to come back and see us again," Yeo said.

"Someone made the comment, the legacy the Australian teams left in Edinburgh at the 2011 World Cup was just unbelievable and you have done exactly the same thing here in Mudgee."

"The people around here are talking about nothing but Touch Football, we've had people come from all over the state to watch. We've had people that have never seen a game of Touch Football come out here on Thursday night, they then came back Friday and Saturday."

Check out what some of Australia's youngest fans had to say about meeting our Australian teams in Mudgee:

Will Parker (13-years-old) to Steve Roberts:

Could you please thank Steve Roberts for taking time out to talk to me and my mates and for giving me his shorts. It was great to have all the teams in Mudgee and visiting my school. I am 13-years-old and love my Touch, it was a great experience for me and everyone who went to the games.

Looking forward to more great games in Mudgee.

Hannah (Nine-years-old) to Louise Winchester:

I was lucky enough to meet you in person and watch you and your fellow team mates put on an awesome display of Touch - your airborne flying try was amazing! Congratulations to you all on your fantastic win against the Kiwis in the Trans Tasman Cup. The game was very inspiring, but even more inspiring was standing next to a legend like yourself and singing the national anthem. Your personal words to me meant so much and I hope to be able to watch you play again.

Best of luck in the World Cup - I will keep training hard in my Touch so maybe one day I can be half as amazing as you.

Flag Bearers

Gary Rose (Australian Men's Open Manager)
Steve Roberts (Australian Men's Open Captain)
Kylie Hilder (Australian Mixed Open Co-Captain)

Mixed Open

Player's Player
Peter Watkins
Coaches Award
Michael Chapman

Women's Open

Player's Player
Charlotte Caslick
Coaches Award
Kelly Woods
Kristy Judd Award
Ashleigh Quinlan

Men's Open

Player's Player
Dylan Hennessey
Coaches Award
Dan Withers

Phil Smith Medal

Tara Steel (TFA Technical Manager)

Mixed Open

Australia 8 def. New Zealand 4
New Zealand 10 def. Australia 9
Australia 10 def. New Zealand 8

Women's Open

New Zealand 4 def. Australia 3
Australia 4 def. New Zealand 3
Australia 7 def. New Zealand 3

Men's Open

Australia 5 def. New Zealand 4
Australia 8 def. New Zealand 5
Australia 11 def. New Zealand 3

Stowe Mentoring Our Future

When the opportunity came up for recently retired Australian Men's Open stalwart Jamie Stowe to continue to be a part of the Australian contingent at the 2012 Trans Tasman Series, it was an occasion he couldn't pass up.

Stowe was named Player Mentor for the event, to help the Australian athletes in the lead up to and during the series.

After 10 years representing Australia in the Men's Open team, including three World Cup titles, Stowe's experience and leadership qualities made him the perfect candidate for the role.

"It came as a result of the culture the Men's Open team have been trying to implement over the past 10 years and trying to continue this legacy. Our coach Tony Trad's belief in strong morals and having good people and attitudes has led to success both on and off the field."

"With the support of Colm Maguire and Wayne Grant, (Touch Football Australia Chief Executive Officer and High Performance Manager respectively) they created a mentor role. I had some

involvement with representing the sport at some leadership forums and we saw the importance of continuing this relationship since my recent retirement in 2011 following the World Cup," Stowe said.

Part of Stowe's duties during the series was to speak at the Australian Jersey Presentation, where he made an inspirational speech to the Australian contingent about how it feels to represent Australia and the things he has learnt along the way. While he admits it was difficult trying to make sure all the players got something out of it, whether they were on debut or had played against New Zealand several times, what he said seemed to pay dividends on and off the field.

"To represent Australia is the epitome of the path we have all chosen. Whether you have played in five World Cups, or it's your first game, it's always an honour and a privilege to wear the green and gold and the coat of arms on your chest. To stand united in the anthem or to play on home soil or to face and embrace the Haka and to try your best, that's what it is about," Stowe said in his address to the contingent.

Stowe's first appearance in the green and gold for the Men's Open team was

in 2001 and he was a constant inclusion in the team for a decade before retiring after Australia's 2011 World Cup title in Edinburgh, Scotland. Stowe says that that the timing of his retirement was right and that he holds his time in the green and gold in the highest regard.

"I guess everyone dreams of fairy tale finishes and it being the end of our four year cycle I was aiming for Scotland and hanging the boots up after the World Cup."

"(Playing for Australia) has been the highlight of my sporting achievements. I have so many fond memories and friendships from this team and I feel I owe it. It is great to see the sport go full circle and some of the young kids we were doing skills with 12 years ago now leading this side into the future."



Judd Finishes On A High

For Australian Women's Open veteran, Kristy Judd, winning a series at home was the perfect way to finish her amazing career.

The five-time World Cup winning player made her debut at an Open's level for Australia at the 1995 World Cup in Hawaii. 69 appearances in the green and gold later, she is one of the greats of the sport at an international level and says that to beat fierce rival New Zealand on home soil was fantastic.

"It was a great way to finish with a win and it was nice to get coached by Peter Bell one last time. He was the one who gave me the opportunity to first play for Australia in Hawaii in 1995," Judd said.

"It was nice to play in Australia and have the opportunity to have some of my family and friends there to show their support."

At the Australian Jersey Presentation in the lead up to the Trans Tasman series, Australian Women's Open coach, Peter Bell and captain, Louise Winchester announced that Judd would lead the team in the first game of the series, which Judd described as an 'awesome' experience.

"I was extremely proud to be able to lead the team out for that first game. It was

a lovely gesture from Belly (Bell) and I was extremely humbled by it. Squeeze (Winchester) was more than happy to allow me to lead the girls out for that game also. I think the gesture itself says a lot about those two people."

"The rest of the girls in the team were genuinely excited for me to lead them out also which was a nice feeling too."

To show Judd's longevity at the Australian level, youngest member of the Australian Women's Open Trans Tasman team, Charlotte Caslick was born two weeks before Kristy and her twin sister, Amanda, represented Australia for the first time in the 1995 World Cup. Judd says that while it is something that she'll look back on when she hangs up the boots completely, what she's been able to achieve isn't something that she's given full realisation to yet.

"I guess it's something I'll look back on when I finish playing altogether; I haven't had any major injuries that have stopped me from competing over the years. The Australian Women's Open Touch team has been really successful and I'm honoured to have been a part of its legacy."

"It's been a real challenge to keep up with the changes in the game over the years though I'm definitely glad I can say I've experienced such changes."

Judd has many fond memories of her experiences playing for Australia including in the most recent series, which she says

was a great way to finish her career at an Open level.

"I have got to play alongside my sister Amanda for so many years which was just awesome and I have also met some of my best friends playing for Australia and I have been fortunate to have had great coaches along the way. Then there's the travelling I've done, I have seen some great countries over time that I know I wouldn't have travelled to if it wasn't for Touch Footy."

"It always an honour representing Australia, playing at home (this series) was great too. We got to watch parts of the Mixed and Men's series and support them over the three days so it was very satisfying when all three teams won their respective divisions."

Touch Football Australia would like to congratulate both Jamie and Kristy on their outstanding careers and for what they have contributed to the sport of Touch Football at an Australian level.



Keeping It In The Family

Gemma & Nikki Etheridge

"It was the most amazing feeling running onto the field in the green and gold for the first time, but the best part was having your sister and best friend running beside you to share that feeling."

For Australian Mixed Open player, Gemma Etheridge, making her debut at the 2012 Trans Tasman Series alongside her twin sister, Nikki, meant a lot.

After serious leg injuries over the past couple of years, being able to reach the pinnacle of the sport was an exciting prospect for Gemma, while for Nikki it was a welcome return to the Australian Mixed Open team after playing in both the 2009 and 2010 Trans Tasman Series events.

"It meant a lot to me without sounding too cliché, but things become a lot more rewarding when you have to work hard to get them," Gemma said.

"To be back wearing the green and gold was an awesome feeling. I was gutted to miss out on being selected in the World Cup team, so to be back playing in the Aussie colours and being involved with such a talented Mixed team was a privilege," Nikki said.

"We've been playing and training together for such a long time, and to finally represent Australia with Gemma by my side is a very special feeling. Gem has returned from some serious injuries, and knowing how hard she has worked to have this opportunity, made this Trans Tasman series exceptionally memorable."

The twins were an integral part of the Australian Mixed Open team's 2-1

division win over New Zealand, with Nikki playing in all three games and Gemma playing in games two and three. Between them they scored 11 touchdowns for the series, including eight touchdowns in the first two games for Nikki.

The Etheridge's have fond memories of their first Australian series together, which saw nine debutants and a new coach make up the Mixed Open team, taking out the series on the final day of the series, 10-8.

"It was a very satisfying feeling to win with such a great bunch of people. We were a new team with a new coach...it was also a sense of relief that we didn't let our country down," Gemma said.

"As with most sports we have a great rivalry with New Zealand. We knew it was going to be a physical and competitive series, so to win in the decider, made it all the more sweeter," Nikki said.

Buoyed by their recent appearance in the green and gold, the Etheridge's are hopeful of staying in the Australian program for years to come, sharing a common goal, to play on the world's biggest stage in Touch Football.

"I dare say this is pretty predictable but playing in the next World Cup is my main goal," Gemma said.

"To remain fit and healthy and continue to play Touch at an elite level (is my goal). Ultimately, fingers crossed, the next World

Cup (as well)," Nikki said.

It's been a good year for the Etheridge's, who also helped their South West Queensland Swans Women's Open team make the final of the 2012 National Touch League. As well as their Australian selection, they will also represent Queensland together for the first time at a Women's Open level at the 2012 State of Origin series.

They are hopeful that they can help inspire some of the younger Swans players to follow the pathway they have in an exciting time for the region, with plenty of talent coming through the ranks.

"It is excellent to see so many good young kids coming out of our region. It can be attributed to some very dedicated coaches and a willingness of our older players to stand by their region and play with and develop them." Gemma said.



Louise Winchester and Steve Roberts

For Australian Women's Open captain, Louise Winchester, the opportunity to captain her country on home soil for the first time at the 2012 Trans Tasman Test Series was only surpassed by one thing, getting to share it with her cousin Steve Roberts.

Roberts was named captain of the Australian Men's Open team for the first time at the series, making it a special occasion for the family.

"I was just so happy for Steve. He has put so much into our sport and he so deserved the captaincy. I know how much it meant to him. I can't even begin to describe how much sharing this opportunity with Steve means to me," Winchester said.

"As well as being my cousin, Steve is my best friend. We have grown up together and our families are very close. We both started playing Touch Footy together as young kids. We would play out the front of Steve's house with all our family over the years, all our sisters and brothers, with my big cousins, Dave and Pauly Forrester leading the way. Our whole family has been involved in the sport for many years in different capacities so to be able to be Australian captains together

means the absolute world to both of us and our entire family."

It was an exciting week for Roberts who, along with being named captain of the Men's Open team, was named one of the Ron Hanson Medallists for the event. Roberts says that sharing the captaincy honour with Winchester was one of the highlights of his Touch Football career.

"We often speak and support each other during tournaments and this was definitely the case in Mudgee. I drew on her experience as a captain during the tournament because she is truly an inspirational leader. From the way she interacts with each of the players in her team to the way she plays and gives it her all, the team love playing with her and look up to her."

"To be named captain of your country is the ultimate but to be also named one of the flag bearers just made an awesome week incredible. It was also great to be able to carry the flag with Bear (Gary Rose) and Lambo (Kylie Hilder) who have become two great mates over the years from Touch."

Coming from a family who have been

involved in Touch Football for many years across several capacities, having the opportunity to play in front of their family and friends made the event even more special for the two captains.

"We are or have all been very involved in the sport of Touch Football either playing, coaching, managing or cheering from the sidelines. They are the reason why I started playing the game and if it wasn't for all their support and involvement I wouldn't be playing at the level I am today," Roberts said.

"To represent my country always means the absolute world to me no matter where I am but it was something even more special to me to have my family and friends there. Their support was simply amazing and it is certainly an experience I will never forget," Winchester said.

2013 Super Trans Tasman Series

The stakes get even higher for Australia in February next year, when the world champions take on New Zealand across 12 divisions in the 2013 Super Trans Tasman Series in Auckland, New Zealand.

The Trusts Stadium will play home to the series, which will see Australia's Youth (18's Boys and Girls and 20's Boys and Girls), Open (Men's, Women's and Mixed) and Masters (Men's 30's, 40's and 50's, Women's 30's and Senior Mixed).

Australia will be looking to continue its recent dominance against New Zealand at the Super Trans Tasman Series, currently the Trans Tasman title holders in all three categories – Youth, Open and Masters.

The 2010 Masters Trans Tasman Series saw Australia win all five divisions, winning 14 of 15 games on offer, while the 2011 Youth Trans Tasman Series saw three of four divisions going to Australia.

The recent 2012 Trans Tasman Series saw Australia clean sweep the three Open divisions, continuing on from their wins

against New Zealand at the 2011 World Cup as well as the 2009 and 2010 Trans Tasman Series events.

Touch Football Australia (TFA) held its Super Trans Tasman training camp on the last weekend of June at the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation, with over 300 players, coaching staff, referees and officials taking part in the weekend. The combined training camp was the largest training camp TFA has ever held and was the perfect way to kick off the team's respective training programs for the Super Trans Tasman Series.

The camp also gave Australia's top referees the unique opportunity to train in camp as a squad and hone their skills alongside Touch Football's top athletes.

TFA High Performance Manager, Wayne Grant says that the contingent's efforts at the camp were great to see and that the teams are looking forward to their next challenge.

"The High Performance program was very pleased with the camp run in this format which was the largest we have ever held.



The players all trained well and are all looking forward to a very competitive series in New Zealand next year."

Teams will be selected later in the year and will train regularly in the lead up to the series. Stay tuned to www.austouch.com.au in the coming months for all of the latest news and information regarding the 2013 Super Trans Tasman Series.

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SPORTINGPULSE ADVANCEMENTS

Touch Football Australia (TFA) recently launched its new website with the help of SportingPulse. If you haven't already seen it, be sure to check it out at www.austouch.com.au.

TFA and SportingPulse have been busy working on several projects together including the Touch Football Rewards program, which is available to all affiliates who sign up to Online Registration and Payments through until 1 January 2015, when online registration becomes compulsory.

TFA, within the 2011-2015 Strategic Cycle has an objective to 'provide information technology systems to the sport at all levels'. More specifically TFA aims to deliver results for Target 4.c. 'Development of supportive and innovative information technology systems to support the sport at all levels'.

As a result of new changes in technology and societal pressures, TFA is working to further develop and create a more efficient SportingPulse online network, better suited to Touch Football affiliates.

TFA is currently in the process of transitioning to a national online registration system. Through its strategic partnership

with SportingPulse, the following is available to affiliates:

Online Registrations and Payments

Provide a convenient way for your members to register and pay online. Link online registrations to your membership information and online payment facility, making the whole register and pay process



a whole lot easier. The trial and testing of these systems has been occurring for the last two years and is now at a sufficient level for wider implementation, therefore we encourage all affiliates to consider the use of these products from Season 2 2012.

Competition and Membership Database

TFA currently is working with SportingPulse to develop Sportzware Online (SWOL), a complete online interactive version of Sportzware Central and Membership. It is a significant step forward that will integrate all aspects of competition management and communication for affiliated members of Touch Football.

Websites

TFA can provide Standard Advanced and Elite website options for affiliates. Affiliates have the ability to own and operate their own website, with a unique SportingPulse Touch Football website address. Websites provide an opportunity to promote what your affiliate does, what it stands for and to communicate with members.

TFA would like to thank affiliates for their assistance and support of the transition towards making the best use of the technology on offer. Check out the TFA Clubhouse section of the www.austouch.com.au website for further information and a wide range of resources to assist affiliates to improve towards implementing 'best practice'.

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2012
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Each affiliate must use national data fields on the forms as outlined by TFA as well as using the TFA national terms & conditions. Each affiliate will be eligible for the above reward as they reach the target threshold. Once the reward is claimed, the affiliate's payments figure reduces by the target value for that incentive. Affiliates can bypass thresholds to achieve a higher value rewards. Threshold targets are rolling and do not expire at the end of a year. Affiliates payments figures prior to the start of this program WILL apply to this program. SportingPulse reserve the right to change the incentive offer, threshold targets or the closing of the program at its own discretion. If this does occur Affiliates will be communicated to about the changes and will have 3 months to redeem any of the prizes (if applicable) in order for Affiliates to participate in the Scheme they must be signed up by 1st January 2015.

www.austouch.com.au/tfarewards

Registrations

Pearson Pushes The Limits

For Northern Territory referee, Tim Pearson, his work as a volunteer and an official draw similar parallels.

The President of the Alice Springs Touch Association (ASTA) and Touch Football Northern Territory's (NT) Director of Referees, Pearson is also a newly appointed Level 6 referee who has achieved some impressive results over the past 18 months.

In both facets, his work ethic and desire for others to get as much enjoyment out of Touch Football as he does shines through.

"I have always been a believer that if you want to have an opinion on the way things are done then you should put your hand up to help out so that is pretty much what I have done. President of ASTA, NT Director of Referees, coach, line marker, barman, media, games co-ordinator are all jobs that need to be done no matter how big or small," Pearson said.

"I have had a lot of people help me out and I just enjoy doing whatever I can so others can have the chance to enjoy the game as much as I do and maybe get a chance to experience what I have."

A former representative player himself, Pearson got involved in refereeing in a similar way to his volunteer duties, putting his hand up to have a go himself after not agreeing with a refereeing decision.

"As a player I often challenged the referee's interpretation of what was happening on the field when it didn't quite match my own opinion. One day a referee politely suggested that I should give it a go, which I did and I loved the challenge. I enjoy trying to get the most out of a game for myself and the players no matter what the level of the game."

It didn't take him long to work out his goals as a referee and he reached one of these in March this year, receiving his Level 6 badge at the 2012 X-Blades National Touch League (NTL).

"When I was playing NTL (for former NTL permit the Barbarians) the first thing I looked at when getting to a game was the badge level of the referees controlling the game and as soon as I switched to refereeing I wanted to join that group of people that wore the black (Level 6) badge."

It's been an impressive 18 months for Pearson, who was part of the 2011 Elite Eight Series and the 2011 World Cup in Edinburgh, Scotland, as well as gaining his Level 6 badge earlier in 2012.



To top this off, in March this year he was named the Official of the Year at the 2012 NT Sports Awards, describing this honour as a 'very pleasant surprise'.

"You don't get into refereeing for any sort of acknowledgement so it was very nice when it came my way. I have had a lot of help from family, friends and people within the Alice Springs and NT Touch community, so it was also a great opportunity to publicly thank the people who have helped me achieve my goals in refereeing. I do what I do because I love the challenges of trying to do it to the

best of my ability and keep improving," Pearson said.

"I have always believed that if I put in the hard work and focussed on my goals it doesn't matter that I am from Alice Springs and the past 18 months has certainly proved that. I have had a lot of help from NT Touch, the National Referees Panel and other senior referees and certainly owe a lot of my success in the past 18 months to those people. The achievements over that time have also allowed me to look at my current goals, reassess and look towards the future with some excitement."

Pearson goes into the 2012 X-Blades National Youth Championships (NYC) as one of the senior referees and is looking forward to working towards his new goals as well as helping other referees reach their potential as well.

"I will be one of the senior referees and that will allow me to help out other referees that may have lower badge levels or perhaps be attending their first tournament. I am looking forward to seeing the State Of Origin competition, challenging myself to perform at my best as well as competing with my fellow referees for finals positions."

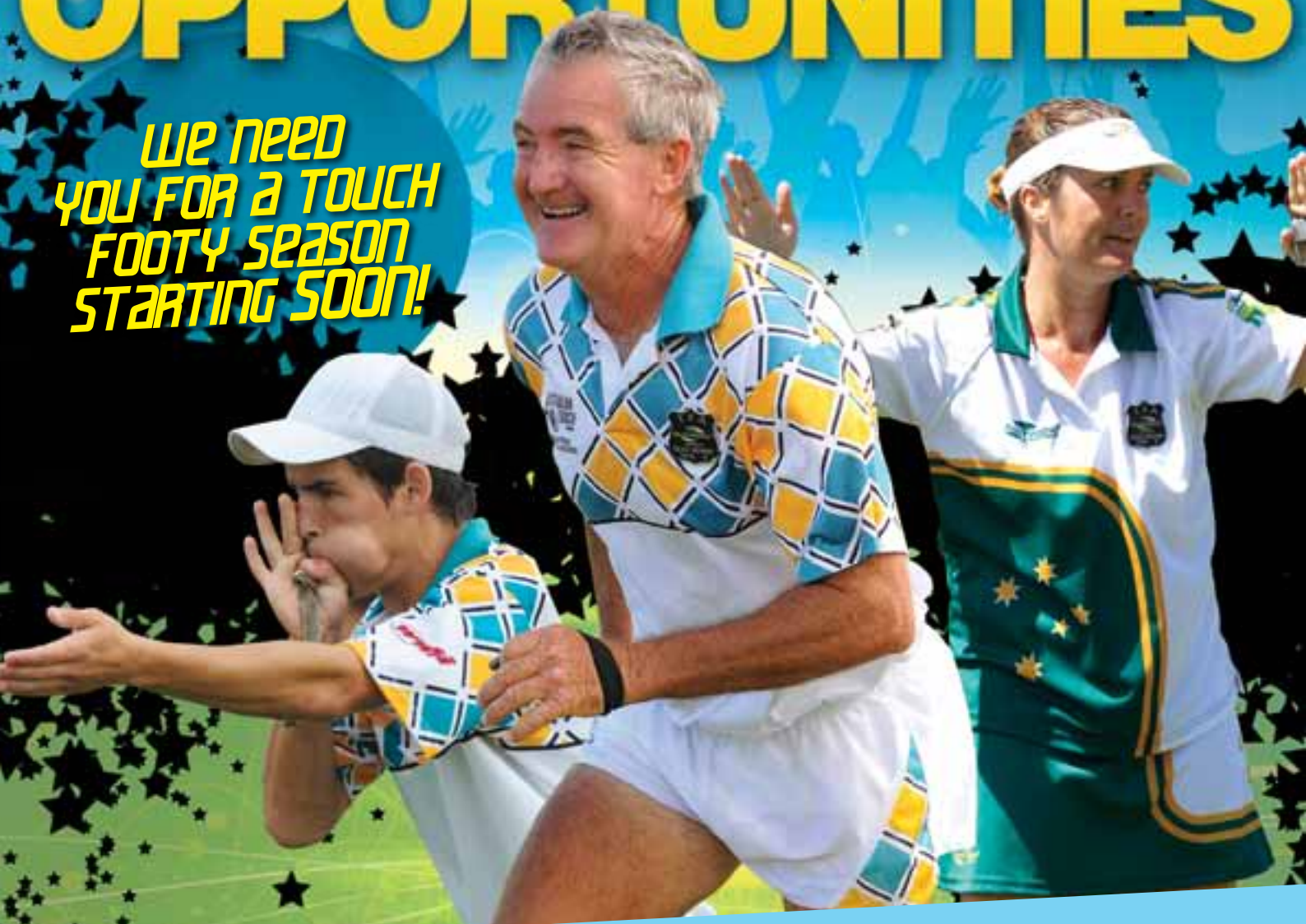
With new goals in place following his achievements over the past 18 months, Pearson is now hopeful of helping others at a local level progress to higher honours as well as continuing to improve himself.

"I would like to encourage more people in the NT to take up refereeing and hopefully seeing the rewards that have come my way will help encourage others. I would like to encourage those that are refereeing locally to make the jump to refereeing tournaments at a state and national level."

"Personally, I would like to start competing for spots in finals at the NTL and NYC and other tournaments. Damien Carlson (South Australia) and Richard McIlroy (Western Australia) have proven that being from a developing state is no barrier and I would like to be the first from the NT to achieve similar, or better, results."

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Langridge's Legacy Lives On

Gove Touch Association lost an integral member of its club when former President Dave Langridge passed away in April 2010 after a battle with cancer. Current Vice President, Bec Thomson, shares with the Hard Wrap how his legacy lives on through the Dave Langridge Memorial Round Robin tournament which is now an annual event.

If you have ever been in our neck of the woods you would have an understanding about how a community can become your family and the loss of one man can draw people together in ways you wouldn't imagine.

After living in Gove in the Northern Territory for only 12 months I found myself on the Touch Footy committee as secretary along with two other ladies that I played with. We took over from three best mates that loved nothing more than having a game of Touch Footy on a Monday night and a few beers afterwards to reminisce about touchdowns scored and put the blame on each other for touches they missed! One of these blokes was the club's President Dave Langridge.

most weekends and rarely left the house without his Akubra hat!

It was in late January 2010 that this fun, loving guy with two children that he adored aged five and two, working as a supervisor at Alcan was unexpectedly diagnosed with bowel cancer. His treatment began while he was holidaying in Tasmania. This was the beginning of his mates, family and Gove Touch Association's plight to get Dave back home to Hindle Oval for our next competition.

The Touch committee began a raffle and decided to host a round robin day to raise some money for Dave and his family. We planned iron man races, a dash for cash and kids games along with an afternoon packed of Touch Footy matches. In total we raised over \$7000 and still to this day the committee are so grateful for everyone's generosity.

A scrapbook full of photos from the day and cards of well wishes from players and friends were sent to Dave in March 2010. However in April, after three short months, Dave lost his battle with cancer.

from the community and gained 11 team nominations. All money raised went to our Junior Development, which was a passion Dave wanted to get up and running in town.

So it goes without saying that in July this year the Gove Touch Football committee hosted its third round robin. With the presence of teams from neighbouring communities including Raminingin, Gapuwiyak and Galiwinku, along with seven town teams as well as amazing donations, the committee was able to give away over \$4000 in prize money.

The Gove Touch Football committee along with Dave's family would like to say a massive thank you for everyone's support in making this day a wonderful celebration of Dave's life. We would also like to take this opportunity to invite teams and players all over the Territory and Australia to join us in Gove on Saturday, 17 August 2013 to commemorate our fourth Dave Langridge Memorial Round Robin.

After two short years after Dave's passing this community still shares fond memories of Dave and I'm no doubt sure always



Born and bred in Gove, Dave did his schooling here in town but more importantly to him got to fish and camp in this glorious part of the world! I'm lead to believe rain, hail or shine he would drag his mates out fishing and camping

In July 2011, the Touch Football committee hosted a second round robin, only this year it became known as the Dave Langridge Memorial Round Robin. The committee received a huge response

will. Hope to see you all in our neck of the woods next year!

Cheers to you Dave!

Thank you to Bec Thomson for the article content.

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Participation Plan – Pathway To Success

June saw the public release of the Touch Football Australia (TFA) Participation Plan 2011-2015 which is focused on specific priorities for continued and increased participation in Touch Football throughout Australia.

June saw the public release of the Touch Football Australia (TFA) Participation Plan 2011-2015 which is focused on specific priorities for continued and increased participation in Touch Football throughout Australia.

TFA Chairman, Michael Rush, said that the plan outlines the foundations of TFA's efforts, programs and focus over the next five years.

"The plan will provide a clear direction for the sport, provide an outline of the activities we will undertake and set some ambitious targets for the sport to obtain. As has been the case over the last three years, the sport will continue to set itself to achieve the highest of standards, with the sole endeavour of providing a better sport for the next generation." Rush said.

There have been many great achievements in the area of Participation in 2012 so far, including in the Indigenous, Deaf and Targeted Growth areas.

Indigenous

TFA was announced as one of the successful applicants in the Australian

Government's Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP) for community based initiatives giving greater opportunities for Indigenous Australians to participate in sport and recreation.

TFA's successful project will see the continuation of the development in the Northern Territory which began with the funding from 2011.

Minister for Sport Kate Lundy said that while 'sport and recreation is a vital component to a healthy lifestyle', it is even more so in Australia's Indigenous population.

TFA Participation Manager, Adam Raptis, said that the funding provides TFA with a fantastic opportunity to continue the development that began last year in the West Arnhem region, as well as to expand into new communities throughout the East Arnhem region and the wider Northern Territory.

"The key focus of this program is to provide education and training opportunities to community members in order to create a self-sufficient and sustainable environment, so that Touch Football may be enjoyed by a greater number of indigenous participants from remote communities on a more regular basis."

As well as this, TFA now has the opportunity to work in collaboration with the New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) to deliver opportunities for

participation to regional communities in North West New South Wales.

Inclusion

TFA was one of four sporting organisations chosen to help launch Deaf Sports Australia's Active Deaf Kids program in Canberra in July.

Federal Minister for Sport, Kate Lundy announced at the launch that the Australian Government will provide an extra \$100,000 in funding to Deaf Sports Australia to support the national roll out of its junior participation program.

"Sport is a wonderful platform for inclusion and I commend Deaf Sports Australia for developing this program to overcome the barriers to participation faced by deaf children," Lundy said.

TFA's involvement continues as it utilises the ASC participation funding to support this community inclusion program for deaf and hearing impaired Australians through Touch Football.

Targeted Growth Program

The 2012/13 Targeted Growth Program recently closed its application process, with many quality applications submitted from affiliates across Australia.

Stay tuned to www.austouch.com.au to find out who the successful affiliates for the 2012/13 program are.



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A record number of teams took part in the 2012 SAPSASA Touch Football Championships in June, while the All Schools Mixed Championships in August also exceeded expected team numbers as well which are very promising junior results.

There's plenty to look forward to in the coming months in South Australia, with Adelaide to host the Australian University Games in late September, with the Touch Football component of the event to be played at City Touch.

The 2012 Touch Football South Australia (TFSA) State Cup will be played from Friday, 26 October until Sunday, 28 October 2012 and early interest from affiliates is looking promising, while TFSA's Annual Awards dinner will be held on Friday, 9 November in what will be the start of a celebration of our sport with the annual charity event, Touch Wine, occurring on Sunday, 11 November. Touch Wine will attract approximately 3,000 guests aiming to raise over \$100,000 for Adelaide's homeless.

The TFSA League, the state's premier Touch Football competition, will commence on Friday, 16 November in an expanded format and will run until February next year.

To keep up-to-date with all of the latest news from Touch Football South Australia, please visit their website – www.touchsa.com.au



THE SA STATE CUP WILL BE PLAYED IN OCTOBER



Tasmania's junior representative teams had the opportunity to learn from the best in the business recently when some of Australia's best coaches put the teams through their paces in the lead up to their respective national events.

Australian Women's Open coach, Peter Bell and Australian Men's 30's representative, Phil Gyemore were in attendance at the Tasmanian 12's and 15's Boys and Girls camp in Launceston in preparation for their appearance at the 2012 School Sport Australia Tournament in October. 2011 Tasmanian 18's Girls coach, Craig Slavin was also in attendance, while the Tasmanian 18's Boys and Girls teams also took part in the camp on the Sunday.

The 18's Boys and Girls teams were also then a part of the National Youth Championships representative camp at the end of July with Touch Football Australia's High Performance Manager, Wayne Grant and Australian Mixed Open coach, Micheal Lovett in attendance.

To keep up-to-date with all of the latest news and information from Touch Football Tasmania, please visit their website – www.tastouch.com.au



PHIL GYEMORE WORKING WITH THE TASMANIAN TEAMS

June saw record numbers compete in Queensland Touch Association Junior State Cup with approximately 2000 players across 164 teams converging on Hervey Bay for the annual tournament. Players from all over the state competed across 10 divisions, from Under 10's through to the Under 18's.

The Eggers Mowles Affiliate Championship was won by the Gold Coast, who also took out the Under 14's Boys title. Other winners included Caboolture in the Under 10's and 18's Girls, Redlands had success in the Under 14's Girls and Under 16's Boys, Palm Beach took out the Under 10's Boys, Brisbane Metro and Ipswich took out the Under 12's Girls and Boys titles respectively, while Rockhampton won the Under 16's Girls division and BMTA/First Contact took out the Under 18's Boys title.

It was also announced at the event that Hervey Bay will host the Junior State Cup for the next five years.

The 2012 Junior State Championships were played at Whites Hill Reserve, Brisbane in September and was a great success.

Keep up-to-date with the Queensland Touch Association – www.qldtouch.com.au



A PARTICIPANT AT THE 2012 JUNIOR STATE CUP

May saw the annual Northern Territory Titles held at the Darwin Turf Club, with this year's competition boasting 24 teams across four divisions competing from right across the territory.

The Men's and Women's Open divisions saw both grand finals and regional finals contested. The Hoops for Health Women's Open team took out the grand final for the second year in a row with a 9-6 win over Alice Springs and the regional final saw a strong performance from Gove, winning 9-3 over Ramingining. The Men's Open grand final saw the AIRSNT Tigers claim a one touchdown victory over the Dodgers, whilst Alice Springs had a comprehensive 16-6 win over the Ramingining Warriors. The 18's Mixed division saw returning champions Alice Springs take out the title again running out six touchdown winners over the Red Dragons. The Mixed Over 35's division saw a close final with the Darwin Legends just nudging out the Mixtures 5-4.

To keep up-to-date with all of the latest news and information from Touch Football Northern Territory, please visit their website – www.nttouch.com.au



HOOPS FOR HEALTH AND ALICE SPRINGS AFTER THE NT TITLES WOMEN'S OPEN FINAL.



The 2012 New South Wales Touch Association (NSWTA) Country Championships were held in Dubbo in May and saw 81 teams participate at the event. A highlight of the Championships was the opening of

the new Dubbo Touch Association clubhouse. The \$400,000 clubhouse was the result of plenty of hard work by the Dubbo Touch Association and the Dubbo community as well as the Tooheys New Crew, who were on hand to help launch the clubhouse. A feature of the clubhouse was shown on the NRL Footy Show in June.

The Men's Open final at the Championships resulted in a one touchdown win to the Wollongong Devils, defeating the Central Coast Dolphins in the dying seconds. The Women's Open final saw a comprehensive victory to the Wallsend Wolves, defeating the Wollongong Devils 8-3. The Peninsula Piranhas were winners in the Mixed Open final 6-1 over Forster Tuncurry. Australian Men's Open representatives Matt Tope and Dylan Hennessey took out Player of the Final awards in the Men's and Mixed Open divisions respectively, while 2011 Australian World Cup representative Emily Hopkin earned the Player of the Final honours in the Women's Open division.



THE DUBBO CLUBHOUSE WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED AT THE 2012 NEW SOUTH WALES COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS.

The 2012 Vawdon Cup season commenced in August and will be contested throughout the coming months, with finals day on Saturday, 3 November.

To keep up-to-date with all of the latest news and information from the New South Wales Touch Association please visit their website – www.nswtouch.com.au



Touch Football Victoria (TFV) held its first ever Women in Sport Forum in July, where members from across Victoria got together to discuss the progress and development of new programs that TFV will be trying to

implement to increase female participation in Touch Football.

TFV had a great opportunity to promote its female athletes in late August when they took part in an exhibition match at half-time of the Melbourne Storm versus Cronulla Sharks NRL match. The best grassroots Fawkner Park players took on the Victorian Women's Open team in front of thousands of Rugby League fans while Victoria's first Australian Open representative, Leah Percy, was recognised at the match being interviewed and having highlights from her Trans Tasman campaign shown on the big screen.

TFV's VT League season will commence on Friday, 26 October and will run through until late February.

To keep up-to-date with Touch Football Victoria, please visit their website – www.victouch.com.au



THE VICTORIAN WOMEN'S OPEN TEAM AT THE MELBOURNE STORM GAME RECENTLY



The annual NAIDOC week Touch Football carnival was held in early July and saw over 250 people across 23 public service and Indigenous organisations take part in the day. The Australian Sports Commission team was too strong on the day taking out the title, defeating a spirited Department of Health and Ageing team in the final.

The inaugural 'Trade of Origin' will be held in on Saturday, 27 October with teams across different workplaces set to battle it out to be titled the best organisation in the ACT.

The colder months in Canberra have seen a busy schedule of school competitions with SSACT gala days being held throughout May and June, while August and September saw several Community days held for Primary and High School participants.

Touch Football ACT will be launching a new competition venue for the upcoming summer season at the Boomanulla Indigenous Sport and Recreation Community sponsored by ACT Health under the Find Thirty Campaign.

The 2012 Super League season will commence on October 18, with finals to be played on December 1.

Touch Football ACT will also host the first ever Deaf Touch Football Nationals in January 2013 at the Deakin fields.



STUDENTS TAKE PART IN THE SSACT COLLEGE BOYS GALA DAY

To keep up-to-date with Touch Football ACT, please visit their website – www.acttouch.com.au

Broome played host to the 2012 'Be Active' North West Championships held at the Broome Recreation and Aquatic Centre in May, which was held in conjunction with the North West Development Conference.



12 teams competed across the Under 18, Social and Open Mixed divisions, with Broome impressing, having four teams competing in grand finals, winning the Mixed 18's and Mixed Social divisions.



2012 NORTH WEST CHAMPIONSHIPS MIXED OPEN WINNERS, KARRATHA.

In the Open division, Karratha were 5-0 winners over the Headland Cyclones.

The Touch Football Western Australia (WA) office is getting ready for a busy summer season which will include the National Beach Touch Pro Tour in October, the 2012 Super League Series, which commences in October and concludes in December, as well as the 2012 Awards of Excellence Dinner. Early 2013 will see the WA 'Be Active' State Championships in February and the Junior State Championships in March.

To keep up to date with all of the latest news and information from Touch Football Western Australia, please visit their website – www.touchwest.com

Youth Inspiring Excellence

When Australian representative, Emilee Cherry debuted for the Australian Women's Open team as a 17-year-old, she was one of the youngest players to do so at an Open level in the history of Touch Football.

For the then 14-year-old Charlotte Caslick, it gave her the belief that she too could strive to do something similar.

Caslick and fellow 17-year-old schoolgirl, Ashleigh Quinlan recently both took to the field as part of the Australian Women's Open team at the 2012 Trans Tasman Series in Mudgee, resembling Cherry's achievements two years prior.

"It was always my goal to make the Australian Open team. I have a great role model in Chez (Emilee Cherry) and when she made the team as a schoolgirl it gave me the self-belief that I might be able to do it too," Caslick said.

For Quinlan, the opportunity to play at an Australian level with players like Louise Winchester and Kristy Judd, who she has played with at a National Touch League

and Elite Eight level, as well as players she normally competes against, was an 'amazing experience'.

"As a player you always hope that you might get the chance to play but I never expected that I would. I trained really hard for the NTL and had hoped that I might get noticed. I was very fortunate to be given the opportunity," Quinlan said.

"It's definitely made me hungry for more. Also getting the chance to play alongside a lot of the girls that I normally play against gave me an opportunity to get to know the girls on a different level – as team mates and not the opposition."

Both girls impressed during the series, playing all three games, with Caslick being named as the Player's Player and Quinlan receiving the Kristy Judd award.

Quinlan says that to win the award named after a player she looks up to and has played with at several different levels of the sport was an 'overwhelming' experience.

"Kristy is a person who I respect so much and to be given the honour of receiving her award at my first Trans Tasman was mind blowing and something that I will treasure for the rest of my life," Quinlan said.

Caslick says that she was 'shocked' to be named as the team's Player's Player and described the experience as 'such an honour'.

"Seeing all the names that were already on the banner before made me really aware of how special it was. Getting my name mentioned next to legends of the game was something I'll never forget and I will always hold it at the pinnacle of my achievements," Caslick said.

To put their achievements into perspective, the pair will both represent their respective school's teams at the 2012 X-Blades National Youth



Championships (NYC) in Port Macquarie.

Quinlan's New South Wales Combined High Schools (NSWCHS) team is vying for its third consecutive NYC title, while Caslick's Queensland Secondary Schools Touch (QSST) team will be looking to win back the title they last won in 2009.

This is the last year that Caslick and Quinlan can play for their schools teams and they are both looking forward to the event.

"It was a really tough decision choosing between Schools and Origin. Queensland has lost this title a couple of years in a row and I really want to help my team win it back. I have been playing with a lot of these girls since I was 12 and this title is really important to us," Caslick said.

"I hope we do come up against Ash's team in the finals but I won't treat her different to anyone else. CHS always put out quality teams and I look forward to playing them."

"This year I have the honour of captaining my team along with one of my best friends, Danni Davis as vice captain. We are looking forward to trying to win our third consecutive title. It would be awesome to go out with the win, but we'll have to see. I'm sure QSST will have a lot to say about that," Quinlan said.

"Charlotte is an amazing player with so much to offer. She debuted extremely well in our Open's team and I know she will be a huge influence for her team (at NYC)."

With plenty of opportunities ahead of them in the coming years, both Caslick and Quinlan are hopeful of staying in the Women's Open program and helping Australia win a World Cup title at home in 2015.

"(My goals are) firstly to win NYC and to play well enough to hold my spot for next year's Super Trans Tasman. Obviously a long term goal is to play at a World Cup," Caslick said.

"I've achieved so much in Touch Football so far but there are always things to keep striving for. I'd like to win a Vawdon Cup title and also State Cup. My biggest goal is to keep getting selected in the Open Women's team and hopefully be there for the next World Cup," Quinlan said.

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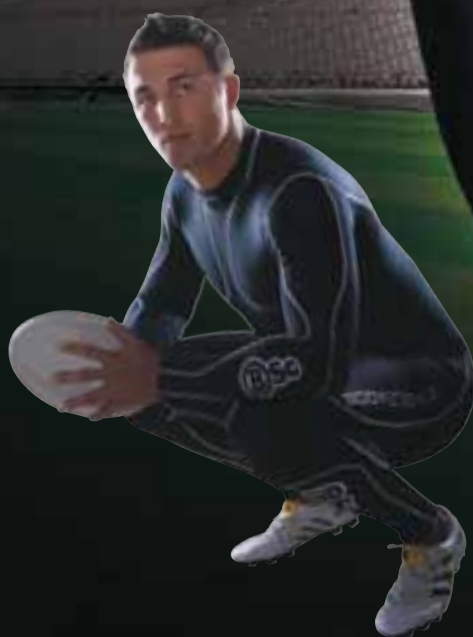


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