

## The Tri-State Bar Football Competition

In contrast to the dreadful conditions during the inaugural contest in 2008, Sydney turned on a beautiful spring day in early September for the third instalment of the annual Suncorp NSW Bar v Victoria Bar Annual Football Challenge Cup. The 2010 program was expanded with barristers from NSW and Victoria being joined by their Queensland counterparts to contest the inaugural Suncorp NSW Bar-Qld Bar- Vic Bar Annual Football Challenge Cup.

The venue was the prestigious St Andrews Oval, Sydney University where the goal posts showed decades of used electrical tape attached to nets that were even older, befitting an ageing NSW team which had prepared for the event by participating, with very mixed results, in the lunchtime Domain Soccer League for a second season. An arranged warm up match against the solicitors in their annual Inter-Firm Soccer Day was aborted supposedly due to adverse weather conditions, although it was heavily rumoured that the prospect of facing a more experienced (if less agile) NSW Bar Football Team may have played its part!

### Game 1 – NSW v Victoria

The opening match was between NSW and Victoria. All three silks from the home team arrived late although one had a leave pass. One was heard to comment that he was not required to attend for a warm up as the juniors were sufficiently competent to open the proceedings.



Vahan Bedrossian tussles with Peter Agardy (c) of the Victorian Bar.

In a lively match NSW dominated the first half and led 2–0 at half time with goals to the impressive Bedrossian, who smashed a shot home after great lead-up work by debutant Walker; and another to Stanton, who matched his goal in the 2009 game with a solid strike from six metres in the Lineker style of forward prowess. Statements from Stanton that the goal was more in line with a Maradona version should be viewed with caution.

The Victorian team had started considerably understrength due to some of their players missing flights and called on the home side to help fill the gaps. Not surprisingly, the southerners were heartened when Mahony agreed to switch sides (becoming the first female football representative for the Victorian Bar team), given the tough tackling techniques she had displayed in the 2009 victory by NSW in Melbourne.

The Victorians' chances were also boosted by the presence of Kuklik

of NSW in their goals who kept the score respectable with some fine saves. Patch of NSW is to be congratulated for some great work playing out of position in defence for Victoria, which may or may not have been a factor in Stanton's goal. Sadly, Mahony pulled a calf muscle while playing for the Victorians but not before she had smashed a vicious drive straight at one of her erstwhile colleagues in the NSW defence.

Victoria was strengthened at half time by the introduction of two very recent readers, Ronald Talasasa and Rodgers Tivosia from the Solomon Islands. Coach Agardy (Vic) had obviously recruited heavily and was keen to avoid three straight losses, and is to be congratulated for giving the Tri-State challenge a truly international flavour in keeping with the spirit of the World Game.

NSW was unable to increase their lead in the second half and the game tightened considerably when Victoria claimed a second



Bedrossian in flight with Geoff McDonald and Michael Gleeson joining the charge.

half goal through a penalty. They were given a second opportunity of converting the kick after missing the first attempt as McDonald (NSW) thought that five metres into the penalty area at the time of the penalty kick was 'okay as they do that in Europe and get away with it.' Referee Tiffen did not see it that way and Captain Austin (Vic) then converted the penalty to move the match to within a goal, giving Captain Harris (NSW) a few anxious minutes before the final whistle. NSW held on to justly win the match 2-1 and to claim the Suncorp Annual Football Challenge Cup for the third year in a row.

Best and fairest were Stephen Free (NSW), who dominated the midfield, and Con Lichnakis from Victoria.

#### Game 2 – NSW v QLD

Given the superior numbers enjoyed by the home team, NSW had a fresh eleven for the second game against Queensland. By this

time the NSW silks were prepared to join the fray.

Philips took over the captain's armband for NSW. Early fears that the youthful, fit looking Qld team would make a strong debut were quickly alleviated in the first half which was dominated by NSW. Habib SC was imperious in central midfield and was extremely unlucky not to score with a cracking low drive from 20 yards out which flashed past the Queensland post. A first half goal from speedy new recruit Walker was followed by a brilliant individual goal in the second half from Bedrossian.

NSW keeper Burchett had very little to do, and in defence Magee, Marshall SC, Gyles SC and de Meyrick were rarely troubled by the inexperienced Qld team, notwithstanding the valiant efforts of their inspirational skipper Selfridge. Patch, restored to his favoured position as NSW striker, continued his previous form of failing to score in the interstate

series and was substituted late. He was last heard muttering of joining the southern bar and threatening revenge. We wish him luck!

Despite controlling the game, NSW could not find the net again and missed the proverbial hatful of chances in finishing the game 2-0 victors. Walker deservedly won best and fairest for NSW, while for Qld Captain Selfridge was an equally worthy recipient.

#### Game 3 – Victoria v Qld

The final game was between Victoria and Queensland with both looking for bragging rights.

Unfortunately, enthusiasm alone was insufficient for the Queenslanders to match a Victorian team which was not only enthused but refreshed.

The game was dominated by Victoria with three goals to Lichnakis and one to Gurr and one to Connor to win 5-0.

With two wins from its two games the inaugural Suncorp NSW Bar-Qld Bar-Vic Bar Annual Football Challenge Cup was won by NSW and for the third year NSW reigned supreme over Victoria in the Suncorp NSW Bar v Vic Bar Annual Football Challenge Cup.

Special mention for the organisation of the day goes to Lo Surdo of the NSW Bar who spent countless hours making all the necessary arrangements for the three teams. Lo Surdo was greatly assisted by Agardy (Vic) and Selfridge (Qld).

Thanks to Nick Tiffen (clerk, 7



Left: Linesman Lo Surdo keeps a keen eye on Cameron Jackson. Right: Stephen Free on the ball.

Selborne), his daughter Hannah, Lo Surdo and Burchett who officiated.

Thanks also to Katzmann J for presenting the trophies and medallions at the post-match gathering. The event continues in no small part due to the efforts of

her Honour, who whilst president of the NSW Bar Association encouraged barristers away from their desks and promoted exercise as a means of fostering better health and community at the bar. The NSW Bar Football Team acknowledges Suncorp for its

continuing support. The Suncorp series is likely to be headed north next year where it is hoped it will be conducted as part of a mini CPD conference on sports law.

**By John Harris, Simon Philips, Anthony Lo Surdo**

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