



Bass Strait Cup

For those that are not aware the Bass Strait Cup has been a long standing competition between Victoria and Tasmania where the two states compete, travelling to each state annually, with the host state often providing horses. The competition faded so Polox Vic approached Tassie about reigniting the competition but for under 21 and junior players. Tassie jumped at the opportunity and the scene was set for a fantastic weekend of polocrosse.

Polox Vic sent a team of players to Tassie on the weekend of the 11th and 12th January with Mick Templeton coaching and I had the privilege to manage the team. The weekend was a huge success and cements in our minds that is important for our players to build relationships, form friendships and sometimes do something outside your comfort zone like riding strange horses to increase confidence and improve our polocrosse skills whilst having fun.

We arrived Friday morning in Launceston, loaded up the vehicles and after a quick break for lunch and a bit of a tourist thing we headed off to the Kentish Polocrosse grounds at Gowrie Park. The closer we got to Kentish the harder it rained so plan B kicked into gear and we unloaded our gear at the backpackers and we all grabbed the rackets for some polocrosse drills and games lead by Annette Radford. With the team ranging from 13 to 19 I can assure you this was funnier than I can explain. Thank goodness they ride better than they run!!! The natives were a little confused to say the least at our antics!!



The weather cleared, we headed to the grounds and under the careful guidance of Mick Templeton and Boof Carlin the kids were matched up with suitable horses and spent some time familiarising themselves before play commenced Saturday.

Saturday was chilly to say the least but the team was keen and they soon fired up ready to play in their allocated club team. With players from A Grade to C grade there was a team for everyone and Tassie appeared excited to have new players in the competition for the weekend. The competition was great throughout the day but we were all waiting for the night game to confirm the Bass Strait Cup winners for 2020.

Mick assembled his team just prior to the game, instilled confidence, provided a pathway for success and sent them out to play proud to be Victorian. The junior chukka went out first and they did not disappoint setting a high standard for the intermediates to follow. Tassie were never going to allow Victoria to hold the title for another year and they definitely did not make it a walk in the park for the Victorian players. After eight chukkas the Victorians were too strong for Tassie and won 23-8 though the score did not reflect the quality of play as it appeared much closer watching it.

On the Sunday we had Blake, Toby and Braydon playing in the A grade final, Lacey and Ryan in the B grade final and Indy in the C grade final. Blake, Toby and Indy all played in winning teams and it was a great way to finish the weekend.



Watching from the sidelines and assisting with the team allows you time to assess the viability of these trips and I am 100% convinced they are vital to the success of our game and the cementing of our younger players for years to come.

You take eight players from all over the state with varying ages, abilities and confidence levels, throw them in a team together and watch the magic happen as they support, encourage and strive for success remembering some of these kids had not travelled before or had the opportunity to ride different horses. On and off the field they supported each other, continually helped each other and made a massive effort to get to know the kids in Tassie and form friendships. Was the weekend a success? I think so and we must say a huge thank you to Mark Scott and everyone in Tassie who lent horses, vehicles, cooked us meals and welcomed us into their State. Hopefully we can do the same for you in 2021.

To sum up the players what an odd bod crew that just made you laugh. Blake led for our younger ones always with a smile and a joke, Angus, Braydon, Ryan and Toby were energetic, funny and keen to have a crack, Lacey was our mother duck always looking out for the others and Phoebe and Indy were our too young superstars that proved they were mature beyond their years who rode them like they stole them.

To Mick, Boof, Annette and all the parents that came to support the team thank you for all your help it does not go unnoticed and I can guarantee you, Victoria left Tasmania leaving no doubt in Tassie players' minds that we are a well-oiled, well-disciplined team that will be a force to be reckoned with in the future.

Cheers,

Bonnie



Mick Templeton (coach) Ryan Dyke, Angus Templeton, Blake Radford, Phoebe Carlin, Braydon Goss, Indy Gray, Lacey Radford, Toby Radford and Bonnie Goss (team manager). Kentish Polocrosse Club Gowrie Park Tasmania.