

NSW Bar FC in 2016: you win some, you lose some

By Anthony Lo Surdo SC and David Stanton



The New South Wales Bar touring squad. (L to R) Hon. Justice Geoff Lindsay, Anthony Lo Surdo SC, Darren Covell, Craig Bolger, Gillian Mahony, Richard di Michiel, Matt Vickers, Colin Magee, Vahan Bedrossian, Ben Kremer, Rohan de Meyrick, Simon Philips (Capt), Justin Hogan-Doran, John Harris, Adrian Canceri, Glenn Fredericks, Geoff O'Shea, Tim Kane and David Stanton (Manager).

Introduction

The NSW Bar Football Club (NSW Bar FC) is open to barristers, members of the judiciary, judge's associates and tipstave, clerks and employees of the Bar Association regardless of gender, level of ability or fitness. It currently consists of some 85 members.

New members

In 2016, due in no small measure to the efforts of Fordham SC reminding readers that there is an easy and a not so easy path through the Readers' Course, NSW Bar FC welcomed a record number of rookies: Megan Batchelor; Ben Kremer; Glenn Fredericks; Patrick Knowles, Amy Knox; Tim Kane, Tim Hackett, Hilary Montieth, Tim Boyle, Philip Santucci and Trent March.

Domain Soccer League - So near but yet so far!

NSW Bar FC competed for the 8th successive year in the DSL competition which was held at lunchtime between April and September in the Domain. A consolidation of the competition (from 5

divisions to 4) saw Bar FC promoted to Division 4.

The competition was fierce over the course of the season. Of the 13 games played, Bar FC won 6, drew 5 and lost 2. With one round left in the regular season, only 4 points separated the top 5 positions. A semi-finals berth hinged on either a win or a draw in the final game of the season against BT Financial Group.

A strong Bar FC took on a quick, youthful and talented BT Financial. BT shot to a 3-0 lead in the first 10 minutes requiring a Herculean effort to stem any further concession of points and to at least grind out a draw. Bar FC fought gallantly to pare back the lead. Those efforts were rewarded in the second half when a nice header from Di Michiel found the back of the net. Bar FC defence spoiled quite a few sorties from BT Financial to keep it scoreless in the second half.

This was by far the tightest contest the lower division of the DSL has seen in quite some time.

6th Annual Sports Law Conference

On 10 September 2016, around 40 barristers convened at the Queensland Bar Association offices in Brisbane to attend the 6th Annual Sports Law Conference chaired by the Honourable Justice Colin Forrest of the Family Court of Australia.

The Honourable Justice Martin Burns of the Supreme Court of Queensland spoke about the disciplinary system based on 'demerit points'. The focus of the address was on the origins and development of the NRL disciplinary system of which his Honour was the architect whilst at the bar. That system, devised in the days of 'Super League', was adopted by the NRL following the 'unification' of the game and has been largely adapted and employed by the AFL as the framework for its disciplinary system.

Mark Martin QC, of the Queensland Bar, then spoke of his experience of appearing for Wallaby and Queensland Reds players who have been cited to appear before 'SANZAR', the South Africa, New Zealand and Australia Rugby, judicial tribunal.

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The Sports Law Conference ended with an informative account given by Cassandra Heilbronn, Senior Associate, Minter Ellison, of the issues in the various proceedings arising from the investigation by ASADA and the AFL of the doping activities at the Essendon AFL Club. It was, perhaps, a fitting update to the discussion led by Anthony Nolan QC of the Victoria Bar at the 2015 conference who spoke about the legal issues associated with and arising from, what he referred to, as 'The Blackest Day in Australian Sport'.

Of course, that chapter in Australian sport will not close until the Swiss Federal Tribunal delivers its judgment on the appeal lodged by the players against the CAS determination in which they have argued that the CAS erred in hearing the doping claims de novo.

A special thanks to all the speakers for giving generously of their time, to Justice Forrest for chairing, to David Chesterman of the Queensland Bar for assembling the speakers and to the staff of the Queensland Bar Association without whose organizational talents the conference could not have proceeded.

Bar Football 'State of Origin'

Immediately following the Sports Law Conference, 43 barristers drawn from Queensland, Victoria and NSW met at a heavy pitch at the University of Queensland to take part in the 9th Annual Suncorp NSW Bar v Vic Bar Annual Challenge Cup and the 7th Annual Suncorp NSW Bar v Victoria Bar v Queensland Bar Annual Football Challenge Cup.

The NSW Bar FC touring squad, tasked with the sacred responsibility of defending the clean sweep in 2015 comprised Adrian Canceri, Rohan de Meyrick, John Harris (GK), Geoff O'Shea, Simon Philips (Capt), Craig Bolger, Richard di Michiel, Justin Hogan-Doran, Vahan Bedrossian, Tim Kane, Colin Magee, Gillian Mahony, Ben Kremer, Rohan de Meyrick, Matt Vickers, Darren Covell, Glenn Fredericks and David (Sir Alex) Stanton (Manager). Also in attendance was Justice Geoff Lindsay (Patron) and Anthony Lo Surdo SC (match official).

Game 1: Victoria v Queensland

The first game was between an understrength Victorian team consisting

of Anthony Klotz (Capt), Jim Fitzpatrick, Michael Biviano, Andrew Yuile, Doug James, Daniel Nguyen, Adrian Strauch, Nichola Rhyder (GK), Lionel Wirth, Tim Smurthwaite and Gorjan Nikolovski and the Queensland team comprising of Lee Clark, Andrew Luchich, Andrew Skoien, David Purcell, Michael Hodge, David Chesterman, Johnny Selfridge (Capt), Daniel Favell (GK), Eoin MacGiollaRi, Jens Streit, Scott Hooper, Rick Green, Dom Ferraro, Florence Chen and Daniel Piggott.

The Victorians started strongly, playing an impressive passing game and looking for space on the flanks. The Queenslanders succumbed to early pressure from the Victorians conceding a free-kick well within shooting distance about 3 metres from the corner of the 18 yard box. The kick, taken by Daniel Nguyen with some vehemence, cleared a defensive wall of maroon shirts, wrong-footed the keeper and comfortably sailed into the back of the net.

Thereafter, the Queensland back four lead by veteran Johnny Selfridge proved an impenetrable force. The cane toads were brilliant on the counter-attack with

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both speed and skill in plentiful supply up front in the form of Joe Morris and Lee Clark who were ably supported in the centre by Michael Hodge and David Chesterman. The Maroons responded quickly and decisively piling on 3 goals by half-time. The Victorians were tiring and with no substitutes, conceded a further 2 goals in the second term. The score could have been much higher had it not been for some impressive clearing shots by Anthony Klotz playing in central defence and the young Victorian keeper, Nichola Ryder, laying it on the line, earning her the well-deserved recognition (and trophy) as best and fairest for the Victorians in this game.

The best and fairest gong for Queensland went to Joe Morris who scored 2 goals and proved far too strong upfront.

Game 2: New South Wales v Victoria

The Bureau of Meteorology's forecast of 100 per cent rain and thunderstorms from 3 pm proved 100 per cent accurate as NSW and Victoria lined up for the second game of the afternoon. An already soft pitch quickly turned muddy and extensive pooling of water made passing the ball problematic to say the least. (The conditions were reminiscent of those that greeted the participants in the inaugural game between NSW and Victoria in 2008 at St Johns Oval, Sydney).

The Victorians started the game obviously tired and more than a little dejected at the loss to Queensland. Nevertheless, they backed up courageously to meet a NSW squad that had been cooling its heels for an hour. NSW proved too strong for Victoria running in 6 unanswered goals (Di Michiel 3, Hogan-Doran 1, Bedrossian 1, Canceri 1). Special mention must be made of the rock-solid defence provided by Magee, Philips, Vickers and Kane.



NSW v Qld: the winning goal.

Best on ground for NSW was Vahan Bedrossian and for Victoria, Adrian Strauch.

Game 3: Queensland v New South Wales

The last game saw NSW backing up for a second hour of football against a rested Queensland team. By this time, the storms that had lashed the ground over the preceding game had eased but water was evident everywhere. Despite having played an hour of football in atrocious conditions, NSW Bar FC started strongly with di Michiel claiming first blood following a wonderful pass from Phillips in the deep. The Queenslanders responded decisively with attack after attack brilliantly repelled by a back four led by Philips and some inspired keeping by Harris assisted, on one occasion by the pool of water on the goal line which stopped dead a ball that was otherwise heading comfortably for the net.

The pressure proved too strong when an over enthusiastic challenge by NSW inside the box resulted in a penalty to Queensland which was converted to level the score at one a piece leading into the break.

With opportunities at both ends in the second half, Queensland was able to capitalise on its chances and put away the winning goal with about 15 minutes to go.

Best and fairest awards for this game went to Michael Hodge for Queensland and Simon Philips for NSW.

Special mention should be made of Anthony Lo Surdo SC who, it has been said displayed excellent judgment whilst refereeing in trying conditions and did not get a call wrong throughout the Championship. Thanks also to Justice Forrest and Guy Andrews (Qld Bar) for running the lines.

Acknowledgement

NSW Bar FC acknowledges Suncorp for its ongoing and generous support.

The future

The Bar Football 'State of Origin' and Sports Law Conference will be held in Sydney in 2017 at which time we will also be celebrating the 10th anniversary of NSW Bar FC. We hope to get together all members of the Club for this auspicious occasion and, in particular, the foundation members, some of whom are still playing and others who are not.

We look forward to welcoming new members to the squad in 2017. If you are interested in joining the team please email David Stanton (d.stanton@mauricebyers.com) to join the mailing list. If you would like to attend or speak at the 7th Annual Sports Law Conference in 2016 please email Anthony Lo Surdo SC (losurdo@12thfloor.com.au).