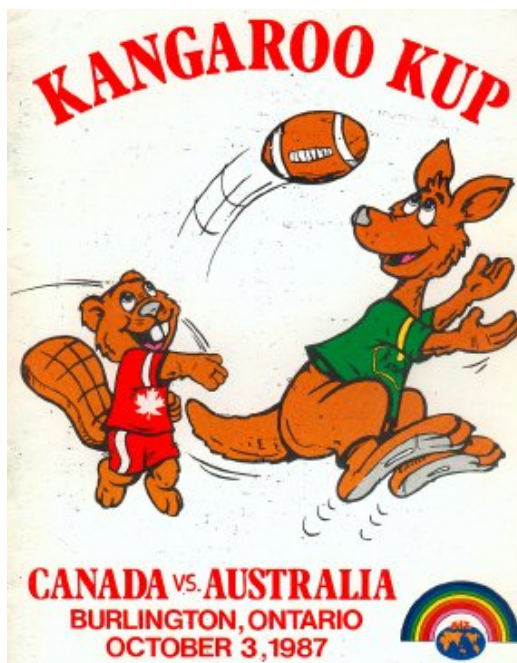


# 1987 International Tours to Canada and the United States

*In October four Touch teams toured the United States and Canada. As a public relation exercise and as a preliminary to the 1988 World Championships, both tours were remarkable successes.*



Peter Rooney who was Tour Manager recalls; *I first made contact with Steve Valeriotte in 1985 and the plans soon began for this tour. It has been my privilege to visit Canada twice to both foster Touch and to promote the concept of the Federation of International Touch.*

*Our Players, Coaches, Referees and Managers leave Australia as pioneers of International Touch and for a sport as young as ours they are most fortunate. The fact that they have in the main funded the tour themselves indicates their enthusiasm; I am sure they will make many new friends and thoroughly enjoy the experience.*



*Caricature of Peter Rooney and Dave Nelson (FIT Canada President)*

The program for the tour was both entertaining and extensive, including playing games and adding the odd sightseeing and fun as well.

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September - Golden Horseshoe Touch Football Championships at Nelson Stadium

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September – Tour of Niagara Falls in the morning and games in the afternoon with a social in the evening at Good Times Charlies

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September - Golf day at Glen Abby home of the Canadian Open. Night games at Nelson Stadium followed by social at Clancys Restaurant.

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September – Tour of Toronto and watch major league baseball game between Toronto Blue Jays and Milwaukee Brewers.

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October – Kangaroo Cup games.  
Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October – High School demonstration games.

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October - Kangaroo Cup games.  
Social in the evening (Awards Banquet) at Mohawk College.

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October – Bus trip to Cleveland Ohio for start of tour of the USA.



PRIME MINISTER - PREMIER MINISTRE

I am delighted to send my warmest greetings and sincere best wishes to all those taking part in the Kangaroo Kup Touch Football Tournament taking place in Burlington. Canada is very proud to be hosting this first tournament of the Federation of International Touch, and on behalf of the Government and people of Canada, may I extend a special word of welcome to all the visitors to our country and wish you a pleasant stay with us.

Sporting events of an international character go a long way in bringing our countries closer together and serve to benefit us all. Not only does this tournament offer an opportunity for challenging and high quality competition, but it also provides a casual forum for the exchange of ideas and friendships between international neighbours.

As Prime Minister of Canada, may I wish you all the best of success in this and future competitions.

OTTAWA  
1987





*Australian Men's Open Canada-USA Tour: Back: Graham Beale, Tim McKee, Mark Brisby (Capt.), Mark Horney, Peter McNeven (Team Manager), Alan Satchell (Coach), Brett Yates, Scott Notley, Rodney Thorogood. Front: Bill Ker (Assit. Tour Manager), Darren Forward, Michael Christopher, Peter Rooney (Tour Manager), John Brown, Mark Saunders, Eddie Basile, Mark Scott, Barrie Keenahan (Assist. Tour Manager).*

## ***The Seventh National Championships***

***The Queensland Over 35s was the only team to defeat the defending champions, New South Wales, in the National Titles held in Perth during April.***

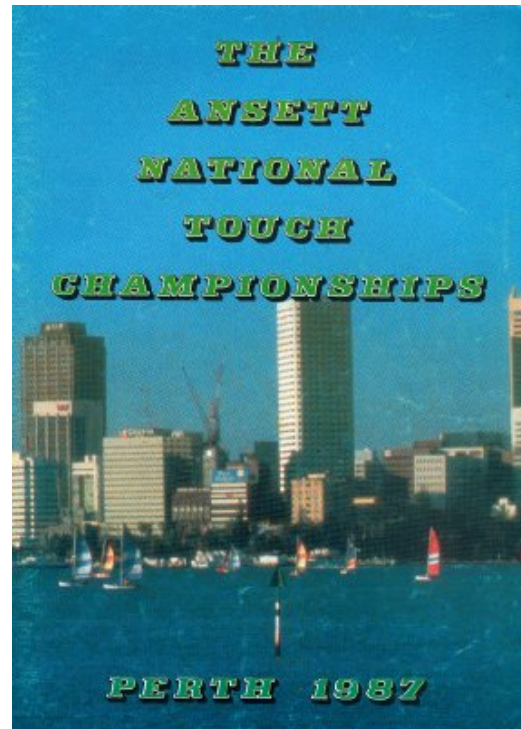
### **Rockhampton Rocket Snatches Victory for Queensland in Over 35s Final.**

Having lost to NSW 1-2 in the preliminary rounds and drawing 1-1 with the ACT Queensland felt confident they could defeat their arch rivals after a 5-0 thrashing of ACT in the Semi Finals. A great intercept by John Dixon and a quick pass from Wally Dixon set up Darryl Lansberg for a dash down the sideline to score the winning touchdown in the dying moments of the game.

The game commenced at a torrid pace and saw defence as the priority for both sides. 'Rocket' Darryl Lansberg from Rockhampton scored the only touchdown in a very tight first half. NSW came out in the second half and fought strongly to equalize. The 'jack rabbit', Jeff Vigors, from the Manly club scored a sensational touchdown

with only four minutes remaining. The scores were now locked at 1-1.

Then when NSW looked set to score again, a pass to 'Bullet' Ray Lawrence was intercepted and it was a foot race to the scoreline by the two speedsters. Lansberg's dash to the line was too good for NSW and his touchdown sealed the victory for Queensland.



### **Cliff Hanger in the Men's Open**

In the Men's Open final NSW drew with Queensland (4-4) in a thrilling display of Touch, only to see NSW declared victors, finishing higher on the points table. This was a disappointing way for Queensland to lose a National Title, especially when they remained undefeated. The preliminary round game resulted in a 0-0 scoreline showing how evenly matched were the two teams.

The game was tight in the first half but NSW managed to skip to a 2-0 lead at the break. They appeared to have the game in the bag but Queensland had other ideas about the outcome. The great Michael Burke's from Brisbane dived through the middle for a touchdown to put Queensland on the comeback trail..

Queensland's chances looked grim when the mercurial Mark Boland slid over to put New South Wales two up again and in a position to take out the title. Two individual flashes of brilliance from the great Scott Notley equaled the score at 3-3 and then it was anyone game.

New South Wales's Brett Gillard weaved some magic and dived over the line for a NSW lead of 4-3. This lead was again negated when Peter Spargo beat the hooter to level at 4-4 and take the game into extra time.

With time back on the inspired Queensland side battered away knowing they need to defeat NSW to take the title as a draw would not be good enough. Unfortunately for them, New South Wales' rock-solid defence held their opponents out.

### **Women's Open**

Victoria's Women's team was the surprise package, drawing 2-2 with ACT, then going down narrowly to Queensland 0-2. NSW and Queensland drew 0-0 but neither team met any strong opposition on their way to the grand final.

During the preliminary rounds, disciplined Touch by Queensland saw two touchdowns scored by Maria McWhirter's fancy footwork giving them a 5-0 win over the ACT. In their corresponding game NSW could only manage a 4-1 victory over the ACT.

Queensland swept Tasmania under the carpet with a run-away 17-0 but was outdone by NSW who recorded a 25-0 victory over the Southern State minnows. After holding Queensland to a scoreless draw in the round game, NSW met solid resistance in the grand final but ran out eventual winners 2-0.

### **Mixed Bag for the Queensland Mixed Teams**

Having not lost a mixed game at national Competition, NSW stormed through their round games to book a place in the semis. In contrast Queensland began well by defeating the NT 5-0 and Army 9-0, but then suffered a 1-3 shock loss to the ACT.

NSW improved their performance finally defeating Western Australia 7-0, which assured them a place in the semi-finals against the strong

ACT outfit led by Michael Sparkes. The ACT's determined attack and ball running assured a repeat of the earlier round result, and Queensland was defeated 1-4.

The final was a one sided contest with an inspired performance from Terry Starr and Stacey Gregory giving NSW a victory by 7-0

### **Blue Stumbling Block for the Over 30s**

Defending their title, NSW came under some unusual pressure in the early rounds before falling over the line 2-1 against their arch rivals, Queensland. Such was the pressure from all teams in this division Queensland also clawed their way to the semi finals series where they met the ACT, defeating them convincingly 5-0.

In their opening round against the Northern Territory Queensland could not control the ball and rarely completed their sets. A disappointing scoreless draw saw the Maroons take control to defeat South Australia, the ACT, and Victoria.



*With the ATA's major sponsor proudly displayed, the Queensland team prepares to leave Brisbane for the Nationals in Perth.*

The Blues had difficulty disposing of their opponents but won all games including a 5-0 victory over Victoria in the semis, to set up a grand final appearance with the Maroons.

In the final, NSW applied the pressure, with two quick touchdowns. Mark Ostwald scored for Queensland just before the break to make the score 2-1 at half time to the Blues.

The second half was all NSW until Mark Ostwald broke through again for Queensland to give them some glimmer of hope. Unfortunately that was all the scoring for the Maroons that day and the strong NSW side won 5-2.

### **NSW Pip Queensland at the Post in the Over 40s.**

NSW and Queensland both put strong performances on the board to progress to the finals. Queensland began strongly with a 7-1 win against the NT and fought through to the finals with only one loss, when NSW went 1-2 up in the second last minute. In contrast, NSW scored eleven unanswered touchdowns against the NT and won their semis convincingly with an 8-0 victory over Western Australia.

One of the Maroon's toughest games was the semis, with a 1-1 draw against the Australian Capital Territory. John Milner scored with a diving touchdown in the first half but at full time a 1-1 scoreline saw extra time not adding to either teams score. Queensland was awarded the match by virtue of being higher on the points table.

In the final, against NSW, John Milner and Rod Lees swept Queensland to a 2-0 lead which appeared good enough for victory for the maroons. NSW's second half was better, with Les Holdsworth scoring out wide and captain, Dennis Fitzgibbon, running in the equaliser. The game looked like going into extra time until Danny Clark dived over to snatch a 2-3 win for the Blues.

### **1987 National Championship Final Results**

#### **Men's Open**

Queensland 4 drew NSW 4

*Queensland won, being higher on the competition table*

#### **Women's Open**

NSW 2 Queensland 1

#### **Mixed Open**

NSW 7 ACT 0

#### **Men's 30s**

NSW 5 Queensland 2

#### **Men's O35s**

Queensland 2 NSW 1

#### **Men's 40s**

NSW 3 Queensland 2

### **1987 All-stars of Touch**

Mark Boland (NSW), Andy Yiangou (NSW), Steve Vickery (NSW), Geoff Wardrobe (NSW), Mark Hearndon (NSW), Kerry Norman (Qld), Karen Smith (NSW), Tim McKee (WA), Cathy Pearle (NSW), Mark Ostwald (Qld), Mick Casey (Vic), Jacquie Anthony (NSW), Rodney Thorogood (Qld)

**Coach of the Year:** Bob White (NSW)

**Manager of the Year:** Peter McNeven (Qld)

**Referee of the Year:** Mick Cook (NSW)

**Official of the Year:** Chris Carstens (Tasmania) (Administrator)

### ***Inaugural Australian Secondary Schools Championships: New South Wales poorly Represented***

***On 24 September the inaugural National Secondary Schools Touch Championships were held at West Belconnen Leagues Club, Kippax in Canberra. The Canberra Times reported that 'this reflects the growing popularity of the sport in Australian schools.'***

With the media flooded by a national schools Soccer championship and the Canberra Raiders first participation in the ARL grand final, Neal Redmayne from the organising body, the Australian Capital Territory Secondary Schools Sports Association, managed little space in the local press for the inaugural National Touch championships.

He later quipped that they needed some streakers or such like in order to gain some media attention.

The Boys' under 16 division was dominated by Queensland winning all their round games and accounting for South Australia 10-5 in the semis and the Australian Capital Territory 6-4 in the final. A notable absence from this division was the New South Wales team which did not make their first appearance until two years later in 1989.

In the Girls' 16 Division it was a similar story. New South Wales was again not represented and Queensland went through undefeated, disposing of Tasmania 11-0 in the semis and fighting to overcome a determined South Australia 2-0 in the final.

Queensland dominated the Boys' 18 division also going through undefeated and disposing of New South Wales quite comfortable in the round games (6-2) and the final (5-2).

The surprise package of this division was the second Australian Capital Territory team who shocked many to join their 'big brother' in the semis finals only to go down to the powerful Queensland outfit.

To complete a whitewash of the tournament the Girls 18 division was also dominated by Queensland, although they suffered a loss on their way to the title. New South Wales defeated them 4-2 in the round game, but were no match for them in the final losing 2-5 to the strong Maroon team.

Despite the media's lack of attention, Neal Redmayne stated at the conclusion of the carnival that it was clear that Touch was making huge inroads in Australian schools, particularly in the eastern states.

However, the great challenge for the sport in schools lay in the southern and western states. But with the seniors progressing so well in these states, it was only a matter of time before states such as Victoria would be represented more strongly in national carnivals. They had already made a great start in this carnival.

**Australian Secondary Schools  
1987 National Touch Championships  
Semi Final and Final Results**

**Boys 16**

*Semi Final*

Queensland 10      South Australia 5

*Semi Final*

ACT 5                      Northern Territory 3

*Final*

Queensland 6      ACT 4

**Girls 16**

*Semi Final*

Queensland 11      Tasmania 0

*Semi Final*

South Australia 5      Northern Territory 1

*Final*

Queensland 2      South Australia 0

**Boys 18**

*Semi Final*

Queensland 16      ACT                      2

*Semi Final*

NSW 6                      ACT                      1

*Final*

Queensland 5      NSW                      2

**Girls 18**

*Semi Final*

Queensland 15      ACT (2)                      1

*Semi Final*

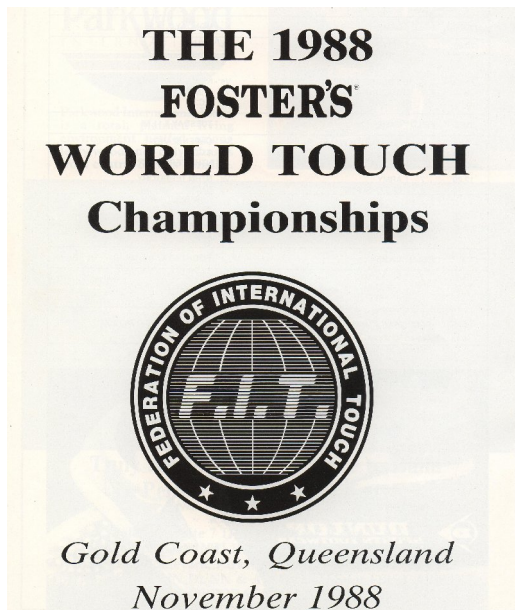
NSW 22                      ACT                      1

*Final*

Queensland 5      NSW                      2

# 1988 Inaugural World Cup Series Staged at Carrara on the Gold Coast

*New Zealand beat their head against a green-and-gold wall, the Canadians drank Aussie beer and turned the grandstand into a swap shop and Australia came home the winners at the inaugural World Touch Championships at Carrara in November.*



The Australians won the finals in all four divisions: the Masters, Mixed, Women's Open and Men's Open. Australia qualified for the four finals by finishing on top of the point tables at the end of the rounds. Canada and New Zealand played off to decide who would play the Australians.

New Zealand made it a clean sweep, winning the Masters, 17-3, the Mixed, 10-6, the Women's Open, 7-3 and the Men's Open, 17-6. It then became a Trans-Tasman battle for the title of world champions.

## **Hard-fought Mens Finals**

The blue ribbon event, the Men's Open final, was hard-fought and closer than the final scoreline of 6-2 indicated. With the score 1-0 in the Australians' favour at half-time, the outcome was in doubt until late in the second half when Australia cut loose, picking the gaps in the New Zealand defence.

## **Womens Finals**

The Women's final was expected to be close, but the Australians proved far too fast and accurate for their Kiwi sisters, scoring 13 touchdowns to nil. Karen Smith and Kerry Norman both scored hat-tricks, but the most spectacular touchdown of the game came from the diminutive number 16, Judy Malcolm.

She threw two dummies before showing a quick step to take her over the line. Di Belling and Debbie Norford scored two more each, with Joanne Wong and Meg Salisbury scoring the other points.

The Master's final provided the closest match of the day, with the Kiwis in a seemingly unbeatable position, leading 4-1 at the halfway mark. With two late penalties, Australia evened up the scoreline at 5-5, taking the game into a sudden-death extra period. It was the Australians who put it all together, scoring the winning touchdown in the second minute of play.

## **One-sided Mixed Open Final**

The Mixed Open final was also a one-sided affair, with the Australians too good out wide for the stretched New Zealanders.

Both sides wanted early dominance but after Australians scored the first two touchdowns and New Zealand saw their chances fade away. Although trying hard they were simply not in the game. Garry Simmons, Cathy Gorman, Cathryne Lockhead, Keith Trenerry and Ray Kiley, all scored two touchdowns each, with Sam Ayoub and Dean Russell contributing one each, in the 12-0 win.

**1988 World Cup  
Finals Results**

**Men's Open**

Australia 6 New Zealand 2

**Women's Open**

Australia 13 New Zealand 0

**Mixed Open**

Australia 12 New Zealand 0

**Men's over 35s Division**

Australia 6 New Zealand 5

***Rematch for New Zealand  
and Canada in Test Series***

***New Zealand and Canada "test"  
Australia out prior to the World  
Cup.***

Prior to the World Cup commencing Canada and New Zealand played a series of Test match as a lead into the championships. Canada were out to improve on the defeats suffered at the hands of the Aussie on their home soil the year before and new Zealand wanted revenge for their home soil defeats in 1986.



*Jim Carruthers the "Tournament King"*

The first day of competitions saw Australia put Canada to the sword again and then exude confidence into the second day against the New Zealanders. A win in the opening match by the Masters saw Australia riding high before the Mens game.

However at the conclusion, Australian players were slumped with their heads down while New Zealand players were cock-a-hoop with the nil all draw, immediately phoning hoe with the news. Day 3 however saw the Australian Men dominate with a 6-0 victory over New Zealand.

**1988 Test Match Results**

**Men's Open**

*Game 1*

Australia 5 Canada 1

*Game 2*

Australia 0 New Zealand 0

*Game 3*

Australia 6 New Zealand 0

**Women's Open**

*Game 1*

Australia 9 Canada 0

*Game 2*

Australia 4 New Zealand 0

*Game 3*

Australia 4 New Zealand 2

**Mixed Open**

*Game 1*

Australia 6 Canada 0

*Game 2*

Australia 7 New Zealand 0

*Game 3*

Australia 7 New Zealand 1

**Masters Division**

*Game 1*

Australia 7 Canada 2

*Game 2*

Australia 5 New Zealand 1

*Game 3*

Australia 5 New Zealand 1





#### **Australian 1988 Women's Open:**

*Back: Garry Blackett, Lisa Neal, Karen Bucholz, Kim Grundy, John Taylor (Assist. Coach), Gai Taylor, Sharon Mitchell-Cowan, Kerrie Russ, Bob Withers. Middle: Les Shaw, Gwynne Ker, Irene Bruschi (Selector), Andrea Bowring, Laura Basford, David Wark, Debbie Norford, Meg Salisbury, Vicki Howell (Selector), Paul Butler, Ted Russell. Front: Helen Taylor, Judy Malcolm, Cheryl-Lea Fields, Kerry Norman, Karen Smith, Bob White, Dianne Bellings, Joanne Wong.*

## ***The Eighth National Championships***

***In an absolute boil-over, but in some quarters not totally unexpected, for the first time in the history of the Nationals, New South Wales is displaced as champion state, with Queensland winning five out the eight events.***

Ken Irvine from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported on the sensation:

*Queensland produced their own version of the flying Florence Griffith-Joyner at the Foster's National Touch Championships at Carrara on Friday November 12. The 'Flo-Jo' look-a-like was a member of the Queensland Women's Open side which broke an eight-year drought to win its first-ever national title. A resounding 5-1 victory over arch rivals, New South Wales, enabled the*

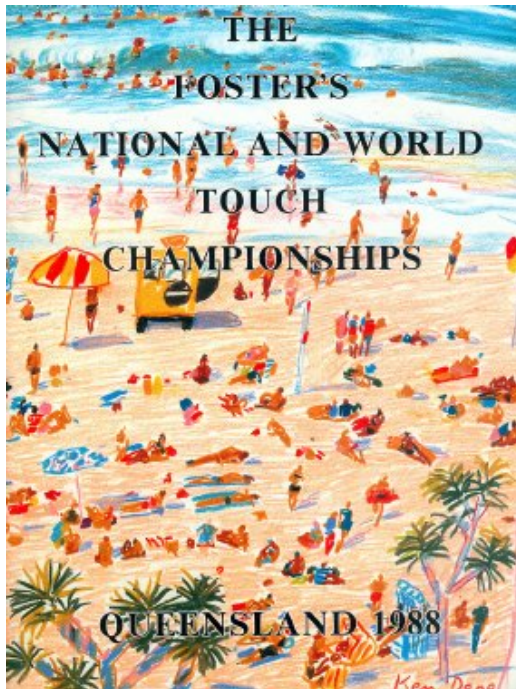
*Maroons to break the Blues' stranglehold on the trophy since the inception of the national titles in 1980.*

*Debbie Norford, a flying machine and highly talented player from Cairns, was the 'Flo-Jo' look-a-like.*

*Two spectacular touchdowns by Norford midway through the second half, enabled Queensland to stretch their handy 3-1 advantage and go onto to an unbeatable 5-1 lead.*

*Queensland captain, Kerry Norman, summed up the win when she declared the side was the fittest and fastest the Maroons had ever been able to put on the field.*

*The Maroons completed a great double when the Men's Open team downed New South Wales 3-1. The victory gave Queensland only their second National Men's Open title in eight years. Queensland led 1-nil at half time, thanks to a touchdown by Mark Giebel. They increased their advantage shortly after the resumption when Scott Notley raced over the line.*



*The Blues hit back midway through the second term when Mark Boland dumbfounded the Queensland defence with a side-stepping burst before Bob Brindell clinched victory for the Maroons. Queensland enjoyed their best-ever success at the National titles by taking out five of the eight divisions.*

From the outset it was described in the papers as a tantalising championship. Cathy Swanell from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported mid-way through the contest:

*Queensland's national Touch Football campaign maintained its momentum at the Foster's Australian championships yesterday*

*In the continuation of the competition which started on Monday, the Maroons won 18 of their matches, lost only three and drew two.*

*New South Wales, the traditional favourites for the National title since its inception in 1980, were Queensland's only downfall.*

*The blue ribbon events, the Queensland and New South Wales Men's and Women's Open teams clashed for the first time at Owen Park, Southport, last night.*

*Both States were undefeated in either division going into the matches and the atmosphere was that of a finals match, rather than a competition round.*

*The Men's Open game ended in a scoreless draw. The only scoring opportunity came late in the second half for the Maroons, but the try was disallowed.*



**1988 Queensland Men's Open Team**

*Back: Bill Ker, Ian Rogers, Pat Grehan, Daryl Francey, Chris Leadbetter, Mark Leismann, , Michael Bourke, Mark Bonner, Peter McNeven, Craig Ellison (Assistant Coach), Darrel Hughes (Physio), David Coe.  
Front: Warren Renolds, Neil Tilyard, Peter Bell, Bob Brindell, Rick Verren Kamp, Mark Geibal, Tim McKee, Scott Notley.*



**1988 New South Wales Mixed Open Team.**

*Back: Alan Crawford (Coach), Vicky Campbell, Glen Richards, Ray Kiley, Tracey Arnott, John Taylor, Ronald Hammond, Stacey Gregory, Dean Russell, Brian Moss (Manager)*  
*Front: Colleen Dunk, Glen Haslem, Catherin Lockhead, Garry Simmons, Steve Sutton, Julie Mazzarella, Sam Ayoub.*



**1988 Queensland Women's Open Team**

*Back: Graeme Hughes (Coach), Maria Mc Whirter, Debbi Norford, Sharon Mitchell-Cowan, Kim Goglan, Dianne Hughes, Karen Bucholtz, Lily-Jane Collins, Gwynne Ker, (Manager)*  
*Front: Leanne Gibson, Donna Sullivan, Kerry Norman, Fiona Mahoney, Sue McWhirter, Erin Vickery.*

**1988 National Championship  
Final Results**

<b>Men's Open</b>			
NSW	3	Queensland	1
<b>Women's Open</b>			
NSW	5	Queensland	1
<b>Mixed Open</b>			
Queensland	3	NSW	2
<b>Mens 30's Division</b>			
NSW	2	Queensland	1
<b>Mens 35's Division</b>			
NSW	3	Queensland	3
<b>Mens 40's Division</b>			
Queensland	2	NSW	0
<b>Women's 25's Division</b>			
Queensland	2	NSW	0
<b>Mixed Juniors Division</b>			
NSW	6	Queensland	6
<i>NSW won in extra time</i>			

**1988 All-stars of Touch**

Anita Vincent (Qld), Bob Brindell (Qld), Brett Yates (Qld), Dean Russell (NSW), Gary Wakefield (Qld), Jason Gregory (ACT), Judy Malcolm (NSW), Kerry Norman (Qld), Meg Salisbury (NSW), Peter Buckland (Qld), Scott Notley (Qld), Sharon Mitchell-Cowan (Qld), Stacey Gregory (NSW), Terry Jacks (Qld)

**Coach of the Year:** Des Noble (SA)

**Manager of the Year:** Gwynne Ker (Qld)

**Referee of the Year:** Des Charman (Qld)

**Official of the Year:** Dr Paul Webb (ATA) (Technical Director)

***Australian  
'Masters' over-30's tour  
to Hong Kong***

*Organised as a President's invitational team, the touring team wore the Australian Coat of Arms, and represented the ATA against the Hong Kong Team, the tour had some success in spreading the good news about Touch as an international sport for this age-group of players, however, as Cary Thompson reports, its long-term benefits were far greater.*

***Dennis Coffey from the  
Australian Capital Territory who  
was on the tour report on the  
tour:***

*The intended objective of the tour was to spread the word of Touch amongst the Rugby Sevens environment in South East Asia and in particular, Hong Kong, with a secondary aim to get the sport into Hong Kong schools. Clearly, with the growing popularity of Rugby Sevens developing from the television coverage of the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, this was a very justifiable objective.*

*Unfortunately, the connections and promotional follow-up was not as sound as had been planned. However, the participants had a great time, did some serious shopping and played some games against ordinary opposition.*

*It was only the second time an invitational squad toured and I guess things were learned that could be applied to subsequent tours. The social element had an unfortunate outcome in tending to brand subsequent senior Australian tours with a less-professional brush.*

*This was something that organisers had to plan to overcome for future tours.*

*The long-term benefits of the tour in my opinion were limited. There were three players from the Australian Capital Territory and we did and have bonded well since that time. Even today, Peter Topp and I continue a great professional and personal relationship in the technical area of the sport. I remember developing a few special combinations both on and off the field specifically with Michael Jonson and Ray Lawrence. These connections had been initiated in some earlier national championships and blossomed later on other International tours to Japan and New Zealand.*

*The invitational aspect of the tour, perhaps, merits some mention. Obviously, the participants had different skills and abilities. It became obvious that to be invited to tour on these international activities, one had to be politically acceptable, even had to toe the line in administrative areas, and certainly had to have the necessary dollars.*



*Brian Rooney (left), an ATA Director, and Noel Hughes.*

*This philosophy even hangs over today, whereby only around 100 players during the NTL competition indicated availability for the upcoming 2004 tour to South Africa and UK for five teams. The time away from work is three weeks and the cost is extreme.*

### **Cary Thompson takes up the story:**

*The success of the tour was not apparent to those outside of Hong King for at least another five years. After the Australians left the Hong Kong, Rugby Football Union Football Club started a Rugby development program aiming at attracting the local Chinese community and*

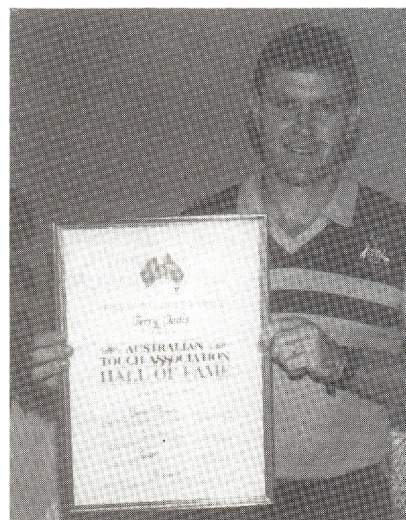
*using Touch as a tool to entice them into the sport. In 2001 the demand for Touch competitions was so great that the Hong Kong Touch and Tag Rugby Association was formed under the umbrella of the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union, with a mission to develop Touch as a sport in its own right. Then in March 2003 the Hong Kong Touch and Tag Association became a Member of the Federation of International Touch.*

## **Hall of Fame**

### **1988 witnessed the first inductees into the Australian Touch Association's Hall of Fame**



**Karen Smith 1<sup>st</sup> Inductee**



**Terry Jacks 2<sup>nd</sup> Inductee**

**1989**

## ***New South Wales Touch Association Headquarters Moves to Tempe***

***For various organisational reasons there were no National Title Championships this year, nor were any National Teams Championships. However, by far the most significant development in Australian Touch this year was the opening of the first purpose-built Touch headquarters at Tempe, Sydney.***

***Originally the administration of NSWTA was conducted at Sports House in Sydney. In 1980 a move was made to offices at Kingsgrove. In late 1989 the current NSWTA headquarters***

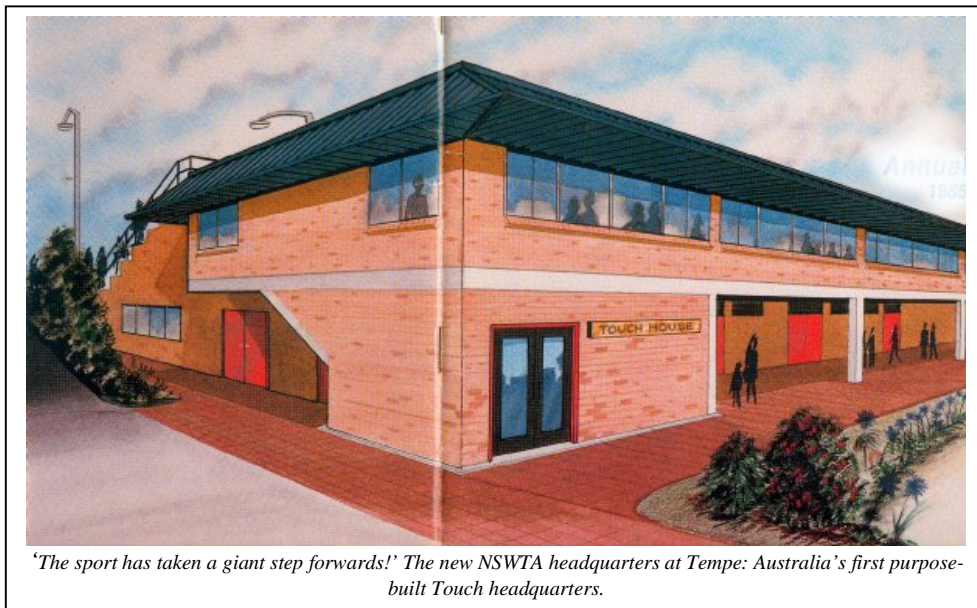
***were established at the Tempe Velodrome.***

The velodrome complex provided for office space, change rooms, club house, grandstand area and seven playing fields. On the 2 May, 1989 the NSW Touch Club House was opened. This proved to be a much needed facility for Touch functions and meetings.

Cary Thompson, then Coaching Director of the ATA, assesses the value of the development: *This complex provided a much-needed facility for the expansion of Touch in New South Wales. Not only as a headquarters, with playing grounds attached, the office space allowed for the employment of additional personnel that was obviously needed for development.*

*The additional storage facilities allowed for merchandising to commence as a serious income stream for the sport. Moreover, now the ATA was assisted with office space, facilities and secretarial services. The upstairs bar proved to be a popular watering hole during representative fixtures.*

*Touch was expanding rapidly throughout the state, and administrators such as Phil Smith and Peter Rooney saw the need for even greater expansion, and consequently built into the original plans of the complex addition foundations for the top floor to be added outwards and upwards.*



*'The sport has taken a giant step forwards!' The new NSWTA headquarters at Tempe: Australia's first purpose-built Touch headquarters.*

# 1990 The Ninth National Championships

*'Territory hardest to beat'- as one would expect, the NT News was unforgiving parochial in its treatment of the National titles held at Darwin's Fannie Bay Racecourse between 10 and 17 May.*



There was, however, a touch of truth to the headline. Ashley Manicaros reported for the *NT News*:

*Queensland Open Men's Touch coach, Peter McNeven rates the Territory as the hardest team to beat at the Asics National Titles starting in Darwin today.*

*McNeven is in his second year as coach of the Australian champions. 'The NT will be the hardest to beat, that's for sure,' he said.*

*'They are on their home turf which will help them.' The Maroons meet the Territory in their opening match at 9 pm at Fannie Bay today.*

*McNeven said his side had been in Darwin for a few days trying to acclimatise to the heat.*

*'We have been training twice a day for two hours in an effort to adjust our bodies,' he said.*

*'The NT won't have that trouble.' McNeven said his side is capable of retaining its Open Men's crown.*

*We have six rookies in the team but they have been fringe representative players in previous years,' he said. Territory coach, Harry Appo, said the Queenslanders were just being polite. The heat will affect them a bit, but they are the Australian champions,' he said.*

The following day Manicaros was no less repentant in his parochialism. 'NT Teams Taste Sweet Defeat', so the headline ran: *The Northern Territory tasted success despite not winning a game on the first day of the Asics National Touch Football Championships at the Fannie Bay fields in Darwin yesterday.*

*The NT was voted the best dressed State at the Titles for the first time in the championship's ten-year history.*

On the second day of the Titles the NT teams had more to crow about when they measured off against the ACT. Manicaros reported:

*The Territory Open Men's Touch team held the ACT to a 3-0 win at Fannie Bay yesterday.*

*The NT side proved dangerous and was unlucky not to score on several occasions against its fancied opponents.*

*ACT scored all its tries in the first half but could not break the Territory line in the second.*

The Territory, however, did bounce back on the fourth day. Manicaros reported:

*The Northern Territory broke the ice with two impressive victories at the Asics National Touch Championships in Darwin yesterday.*

*The victories included a history-making 8-2 win against the ACT in the Open Women's. The NT's other win came from the Men's O30s, who beat Defence 3-2 in the dying minutes of the game.*

To conclude its coverage of the titles, the *NT News* quoted Ken Wells, the ATA President, giving the Fannie Bay fields a huge wrap: 'These fields are the best in the history of the titles. The lighting is superb. It is only the second time that the titles have been played under lights.'



**1990 National Championships: Queensland's Women's Over 27s.**

Back: Loyla Lesley (Manager), \*\*\*, Debbie Lenaghan, \*\*\*, Fiona Mahoney, Charlie Timms (Coach), Pam Ackerman, \*\*\*, Gwynne Kerr (Assistant Tour Manager)  
 Front: \*\*\*, \*\*\*, Kerry Staff, Kerrie Norman,, Charly Betizel, Theresa Batchelor, \*\*\*.

**1990 National Championships  
 Final Results**

**Men's Open**

Queensland 3 NSW 3

*Queensland won for finishing higher on the competition table.*

**Women's Open**

NSW 4 Queensland 0

**Mixed Open**

NSW 2 Queensland 1

**Mens 30's Division**

NSW 3 Queensland 0

**Mens 35's Division**

NSW 1 Queensland 0

**Mens 40's Division**

Queensland 0 NSW 0

*NSW won for finishing higher on the competition table.*

**Women's 27's Division**

Queensland 0 NSW 0

*NSW won for finishing higher on the competition table.*

**1990 All-stars of Touch**

Scott Notley (Qld), Paulette Oldham (Qld), Glen Haslam (NSW), Stacey Gregory (NSW), Kerry Norman (Qld), Andy Yiangou (NSW), John Fielding (WA), Peter Buckland (Qld), Sue Dorrington (NSW), Eddie Hilaire (NSW), Joanne Van Der Griend (NSW), Adrian Lam (Qld), Michelle Clough (NSW), Jamie Thomas (NSW)

**Coach of the Year:** Maria Arthur (SA)

**Manager of the Year:** Narelle Thompson (NSW)

**Referee of the Year:** Tim Freebody (Qld)

**Official of the Year:** Bob Watts (ACT) (Tour Manager)



# 1991 Second Touch World Cup

*Australia scoops the prizes at Ellerslie Racecourse, Auckland during late November 1991.*



The World Cup of Touch was safely in Australian hands, but many erudite observers predicted that the era of total Aussie dominance in the sport may be ending. This was the message from the finals, played in Auckland, which saw the green and gold come off second-best in a division for the first time in international Touch history.

Neil Blanchfield, Executive Officer from the New Zealand Touch Association, assisted by his wife, Renata, provided outstanding organisation for the event, but this was not enough to prevent the major prizes going back across 'the ditch'.

The upset came in the Women's Over 27 final where the drop-off system had to be employed when the two sides finished level at 3-3 after 50 minutes play. With just six players left on the

field, New Zealander, Deslea-Anne Wrathall, saw her chance to race away and send the 4,700 home crowd wild with delight. It was the only Australian defeat in five days of World Cup competition, and the result was just the boost the New Zealanders wanted for the following Men's Over-30 final.

Apart from the 4-3 scoreline in favour of New Zealand, there were several features for the Australian Women's Over 27. Sharon Mitchell-Cowan was the first-ever Australian female coach, and it was Judy Malcolm's last game for Australia. By 2002 her sons were playing for Australia. Troy was to go on to represent Australia in the Men's Open and Jye in the Men's Under 18s.

The fired-up Kiwis produced a Hakka before the game began, but might just as well have saved their energy. The Australians played a patient game until Mark Scott produced a touchdown out of nothing mid-way through the first half, then proceeded to bury their luckless opponents. Chief undertaker was Canberra's Garry Lawless who has been the curse of the Kiwis since opening the scoring against them in Touch's first international fixture six years earlier. He added three more in 1992: 'more than I normally score in a season,' he admitted afterwards.

The two glamour matches of the day, the Men's and Women's Open, were virtual no-contests, with the women going on an 8-0 scoring rampage. The Australians scored almost at will against a team that had been reduced to going through the motions long before half-time.

The Open Men also kept the opposition scoreless in a 4-0 victory. The ease of the win surprised even coach Peter McNeven who said the New Zealanders had looked well below their form of the early rounds.

Sam Ayoub, vice-captain, who roomed with the young and sensational, Adrian Lam, became lifelong mates. Soon after the tour Sam moved into player management for Super League and was responsible for contracting Adrian Lam for Eastern Suburbs Roosters. At the time Adrian was playing for Easts in Brisbane's local first division comp.

Bob Brindell from Queensland was Player of the Series, and was to achieve the same credentials four years later in Hawaii.



**Australian Men's Open Second World Cup - Auckland:**

Back Row: Paul Jonson (ATA President), Darren Shelley, Bill Ker (Asst. Tour Manager), Julian Buckmaster, Ken Wells (Tour Manger). Third Row: Brian Rooney (Head Coach), Paul Sherriff (Medical Team), Jim Marinos, Tim Villalba, Arthur Bosanquet (Tour Doctor), Brenda Wendt (Medical Team). Second Row: Alan Satchell (Asst. Coach) Craig Pierce, Steve Mueller, Peter McNeven (Coach), Ray Somerville, Patrick Graham, Ian Rodgers (Manager). Front Row: Shane Rigby, Adrian Lam, Scott Notley (Captain), Sam Ayoub (Vice-Capt.) Jules Mann, Bob Brindell.



**Australian Women's Over 27 Second World Cup - Auckland:**

Back Row: Paul Jonson (ATA President), Gwynne Ker (Manager), Paul Sherriff (Medical Team), Judy McLean, Donna Sedgman, Arthur Bosanquet (Tour Doctor) Brenda Wendt (Medical Team), Ken Wells (ATA Executive Director). Middle Row: Brian Rooney (Head Coach), Therese Batchelor, Jenny Madders, Sharon Mitchell-Cowan (Coach), Kathryn Beitzel, Kerry Staff, Garry Giles (Asst. Coach). Front Row: Galyle Aistrophe, Debra Brown, Fiona Mahoney (Vice-Cap.), Judy Malcolm (Capt.), Pam Wecker (Vice-Capt.), Donna O'Connor (Vice-Capt.), Leanne Hudson, Karen Breden.

Katrina Maher was outstanding in the Women's Open, but those who were at Ellerslie Racecourse at the time will never forget Coach, Mark Egan's master stroke. Quite unexpectedly and controversially, he played Joanne Wong (Henwood), a winger in the middle, and she totally destroyed the New Zealand defence.

For Captain and inductee in the ATA Hall of Fame, Karen Smith, this was to be her last tour. Where was Kerry Norman during the series? She was at home waiting for the birth of her baby!



Judith Ireland of Mayfield, NSW was a member of Australia's undefeated Mixed team. She left her mark on the competition, being named female player of the series in her division. She was also named in the mixed division all-star line-up after her team beat New Zealand 3-1 in the final.

Australia's Mixed team had to cope with a hamstring injury to Greg English which kept the key defensive player sidelined for most of the game, but still got home safely 3-1. And Ron Chilby's hat-trick was the foundation for the Men's Over 35s clear-cut win.

One surprising aspect of the World Cup was the popularity of Touch in New Zealand, with crowds of up to 5,000 attending the games. The Men's and Women's finals were shown on television.

### 1991 World Cup Results

#### Men's Open

Australia 4    New Zealand 0

#### Women's Open

Australia 8    New Zealand 0

#### Mixed

Australia 3    New Zealand 1

#### Women's 27

New Zealand 4    Australia 3

#### Men's 30

Australia 6    New Zealand 1

#### Men's 35

Australia 6    New Zealand 1

## *Trans-Tasman Series and Over 40s Tour of New Zealand*

*Following ten years of National competition, ADFTA (Defence) Touch came of age in this tour, with its first representative player to tour in a National team. Cary Thompson reports on the tour:*

*Prior to the World Cup in 1991 a series of Test matches between Australia and New Zealand was arranged to be played at Waikato Rugby Grounds in Hamilton.*

*It was the first times that over-age divisions matches were granted Test status. It also was the Fourth Trans- Tasman series between these two*

nations. The Masters (over 35s years) games was a stroll in the park for the Australians, who easily downed their opponents 12-0. Best for the Aussies were Garry Clarke, Peter Vincent and Martin Fletcher. The Men's senior game was probably the most exciting of the series.

With both sides having impregnable defence the score was 0-0 until minutes from full time. Legend Australian player Garry Lawless scored what he thought was a fair touchdown, but the referee called that he had been touched. A protest to the referee and lineman to ask the player if the touch was made or that he had even claimed.

The complaint resulted in the New Zealand players saying that no touch was claimed and that the touchdown should be allowed.

The Australians won 1-0 and there was no time left on the clock to re-start the game. The sportsmanship of the New Zealand side was commented upon by everyone who witnessed the game. Gary Lawless was the standout Australian player along with Stephen Kolenko and Glen Chesher. For New Zealand Mike Ah Loo, Mark Taylor and Lance Watane stood out.

The Womens senior's game was just as hard fought as the Men's Seniors were. Australia never really dominated but got away from New Zealand in the end to record a 3-1 victory. Donna O'Connor, Debra Brown, Fiona Mahoney and Theresa Batchelor all played well for the winners while Robyn Proffit stood out for New Zealand.

After winning the senior divisions Australia were determined to make a clean sweep of the series by winning the Opens divisions. In the mixed division the visitors were simply too strong for their host winning 8-1 in a canter.

Judith Ireland, Corey Foster, Dean Russell and Darren Shelley played well for the Australians, while for New Zealand Kopae Irihei made his international debut alongside Claire Dayberg.

The Women's game was close but again Australia prevailed 3-2 with Joanne Wong and Paula Vassalo playing a starring role.

The Men wrapped up the series with a 4-0 defeat of New Zealand with Robert Brindell, Scott

Notley and Jim Marinos standing out for the victors.



'I'm a little teapot, short and stout ...': Cary Thompson, ATA Director of Coaching and newly appointed President of the Federation of International Touch, hams it up at the Australian's World Cup social occasion.

Accompanying the tour was the Australian Over 40 Men's team. The players came from Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Defense Forces, and the tourist played matches in the North Island against some strong provincial teams. They defeated Waikato 11-0, a combined Waikato-Bay of Plenty team 4-1, Rotorua 8-4, Whakatane 4-0, Te Awamatu 8-2, Northcote, 11-0 and Auckland 18-4. Stand-out players on the tour were Dave Knight, Ray Grigg and John Dixon.

**1991 Fourth Trans Tasman Test Results**

**Men**

Australian 4 New Zealand 0

**Women**

Australia 7 New Zealand 0

**1991 Fourth Trans Tasman Test  
Results**

**Mixed Open**

Australia 3    New Zealand 1

**Senior Men**

Australia 5    New Zealand 1

**Senior Women**

New Zealand 4    Australia 3

**Masters' Men**

Australia 5    New Zealand 1

## ***Tenth National Championships***

***Canberra Hosted the Nationals at  
Bruce Stadium, while the ACT  
really performed well in front of  
their home crowd.***

The 10th National Touch Championships were held at Bruce Stadium, Canberra, in March..

Unfortunately, Tasmania and Victoria did not participate, making these titles the first since 1982 where all states were not represented. The ATA was keen to rectify this for the 1992 championships, which were to be held in Hobart in May of the following year.

The Championships were opened by the Federal Minister for Sport, Ros Kelly, with the march-past being held at Parliament House. Attending the opening ceremony were ACT Senators Margaret Reid and Bob McMullen, as well as representatives from the Australian Sports Commission and private sector organisations. As Bruce Stadium can only contain three touch fields, some games were played at night under lights.

### **Laura Basford - a star for the ACT contingent**

The *Canberra Times* gave strong support for the Championships, and particularly gave Laura

Basford from the ACT a glowing report. Graham Cooke reported enthusiastically about her game: *Laura Basford decided to take up Touch after a stint as manager of a junior Rugby League team. She continues, she says, 'because as a public servant I spend too much time on my bottom.'*

*There are probably a few opponents of the ACT Women's team at the Championships who wish she would spend more time there as she emerges as one of the tournament's stars.*

*Basford would be the last to admit she makes more than an average contribution to her team. Coach Neil Henry is not so reticent, praising yet another match-winning performance in the match against Western Australia.*

*While she played socially at school, she never seriously considered herself as a future representative. 'People kept on pushing me into it,' she said.*

*Her first championships were in 1988 in Perth, and she has been playing for her state ever since. 'From the team's point of view this has to be our best tournament -- we're really going well at the moment,' she said.*

### **TENTH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**



**BRUCE STADIUM  
CANBERRA 1991**

The ACT Men's and women's teams certainly lifted their games from previous years to push for finals contentions. The Women's team started brilliantly in the round matches. Graham Cook reports:

*With a second-half display as bright as the autumn sunshine bathing Bruce Stadium, ACT Women gained a historic victory over Queensland on day one of the Australian Touch*

Final. Touch-downs by Laura Basford, Lisa Camden and Jenny McClung, the last coming inside the final minute of play, gave the home side a 3-2 victory, fighting back from being 0-2 down. The ACT got better as the game progressed and the key to its win was the standard of communication among its players. Other early news from the ACT was not so good.

A Men's over 30 years match was lost to the Queenslanders 2-1 and in the Open Men's section the Maroons took full revenge, winning 10-1. Later in the evening the ACT came back to beat South Australia 5-3.



Northern Territory's Teri Leonard fails to touch the ACT's Laura Basford in the Women's Open at the 1991 Nationals. Photo courtesy of the Canberra Times.

ACT Men's Open coach, Gary Lawless was philosophical about his team's performance. 'It's partly the numbers game,' he lamented. Queensland pick their players from 30,000 registered players, while we have 6,000 players.'

'Even so, we can still find the players. It's given them the sustained level of intense competition in preparation for these championships which is our problem.'

And, of course, that was the essence of the problem for the states and territories outside of Queensland and New South Wales. The Finals scoreboard below shows the realities of Touch at a national level. But, by all accounts, the Men's Over match between New South Wales and the ACT was a close thing.

The presentation function was held at the National Convention Centre where Australian teams to compete at the Second World Cup in Auckland later in the year were announced.

### 1991 All-stars of Touch

Jamie Black (NSW), Katrina Maher (NSW), Stacey Gregory (NSW), Tony Howard (NSW), Garry Lawless (ACT), Mick McCall (NSW), Donald Smith (Qld), Judy Malcolm (NSW), Darryl Fry (Qld), Michelle Clough (NSW), Jamie Thomas (NSW), Amanda Baska (Qld), Darren Shelly (NSW), Garry Clarke (NSW)

**Coach of the Year:** Peter McNeven (Qld)  
**Manager of the Year:** Ian Rogers (Qld)  
**Referee of the Year:** Greg Summers (Qld)  
**Official of the Year:** Brian Rooney (NSW) (Head Coach)



Queensland's Laurie Brindell takes off with the ball on his way to the try line as an ACT player tries to touch during the first day of the 1991 Nationals. Photo courtesy of the Canberra Times.

### 1991 National Championships Results

#### Men's Open \*

NSW 4 Queensland 3 (extra time)

#### Women's Open

NSW 9 Queensland 5

#### Mixed Open

NSW 5 Queensland 2

#### Men's Over 30 \*

NSW 0 ACT 0

\* In extra time, NSW won due to being higher on the competition table

#### Men's Over 35

NSW 2 Queensland 1

#### Men's Over 40

NSW 4 Queensland 1

#### Women's Over 27

Queensland 2 NSW 1 (extra time)

# 1992 Eleventh National Championships

*Hobart turned on the weather  
and the crowds.*

Australia's elite Touch players slipped and slid their way through the opening rounds of the Australian Touch Championships as the heavens opened over Hobart's Eastern Shore's Wentworth Park.

But the rain and wintry conditions were not enough to dampen the enthusiasm of these super-fit athletes. Groups of school children lined the roadways and boundaries to witness, for most, their first glimpse of a game which had taken over as the biggest participant sport in New South Wales and Queensland schools.



Peter Staples reported on the opening ceremony for the Hobart Mercury:

*As the band played Waltzing Matilda, the elite of Australia's touch footballers marched along Bligh Street, Rosny, yesterday to launch the start of the Australian Touch championship to be played at Wentworth Park this week*

*'It is the greatest participant sport in schools in New South Wales and Queensland and we envisage Touch becoming one of the five biggest participant sports in the nation within the next five years,' Australian Touch Association president, Mr Paul Jonson, said.*

*Hobart last hosted the national Touch championships in 1983, but the sport has since grown enormously in popularity throughout Australia and is played competitively in New Zealand Japan and USA.*



*Welcome folks ... and keep in touch! Girls from the Queensland team at the opening march wave to onlookers.*

Through the Mercury Peter Staples concluded with his coverage of the finals:

*The big guns of Touch, Queensland and New South Wales, saved their best for last as the national championships wound up at the Eastern Shore's Wentworth Park yesterday.*

*Both states made the finals in all divisions, but it was the Women's and Men's Open teams who provided the thrills and spills.*

Queensland's Men's open team notched its third title in four years with a 3-2 win against New South Wales after the match travelled into a third stage of extra time.

When the full-time hooter sounded, the scores were locked at 2-2. The game then reverted to drop-off mode. The scores were level at the end of the first two-minute segment of extra time, which meant each team had to reduce its on-field number to six players.

It then got down to five-a-side after there was no addition to the scoreline two minutes later.

No further drop-offs were required after Shane Rigby landed the winning sudden-death try to give the Maroons a well-deserved win. Queensland coach Peter McNeven, hailed his players as the best combination in his four years at the helm.

'This is a fantastic team unit and it thoroughly deserved to win,' he said. 'They are a great bunch of guys who play for each other and I guess that's what wins championships.'

'New South Wales knocked us off in the final last year, during the second drop-off stage of extra time, so I guess this makes us even.'

### 1991 All-stars of Touch

Mark Boland (NSW), Joanne Wong (NSW), Steve Hancock (Qld), Trevor Phillips (Qld), Peter Buckland (Qld), Kerry Norman (Qld), Debbie Biddolph (NSW), Renee Clark (Qld), Alex Illin (Qld), Michael McGovern (ACT), Patrick Grehan (Qld), Kobie Jones (NSW), DJamie Thomas (NSW), Scott Notley (Qld)

**Coach of the Year:** Garry Giles (NT)

**Manager of the Year:** Ralph Powell (Qld)

**Referee of the Year:** Tim Freebody (Qld)

**Official of the Year:** Graeme Murphy (ATA Development Officer)

Yesterday, New South Wales led 1-0 at half-time, but the Maroons bounced back in the opening minute of the second half with a touchdown from skipper, Scott Notley.

New South Wales replied quickly through Darren Shelley, but Queensland winger, Adrian Lam, scored the leveller at the four-minute mark.

New South Wales made it three successive Women's Open titles when it defeated Queensland 2-1 in a thriller.

New South Wales was first to score through a diving try by Jennie Williams early in the first half and the Blues went into the half-time break with that advantage.

But the Maroons fought back in the opening minute of the second half to level the ledger with a try from middle-player, Julie Styles.

It looked as if this match also would revert to drop-off rules, but a touch of magic from middle-player, Vassala resulted in the winning touchdown only seconds before the final hooter.

New South Wales won the Men's 30-and-over title, 1-0 and stormed to a 3-0 victory in the Men's 40-and-over final.

Queensland proved too good for New South Wales in the Women's-27-and-over final, winning 2-1. The Blues squared the championship ledger at three titles a piece when their Men's 35-and-over line-up defeated New South Wales, 3-1.

The President of the ATA, Mr Paul Jonson, said it was the best championship in eleven years of national competition.

### 1992 National Championships Results

	<b>Men</b>		
Queensland	3	NSW	2
	(extra time)		
	<b>Women</b>		
NSW	2	Queensland	1
	<b>Women's 27</b>		
Queensland	3	NSW	1
	<b>Men's 30</b>		
NSW	1	Queensland	0
	<b>Men's 35</b>		
Queensland	3	NSW	1
	<b>Men's 40</b>		
NSW	3	Queensland	0



## ***Touch makes it in Australia's Top 10 Participation Sports: A milestone reached and future challenges considered***

***In February 1992 survey results from the Australian Sports Commission placed Touch ninth on a list of the twenty most popular participant sports in Australia. The data was based on registered players with clubs affiliated with the Australian Touch Association.***

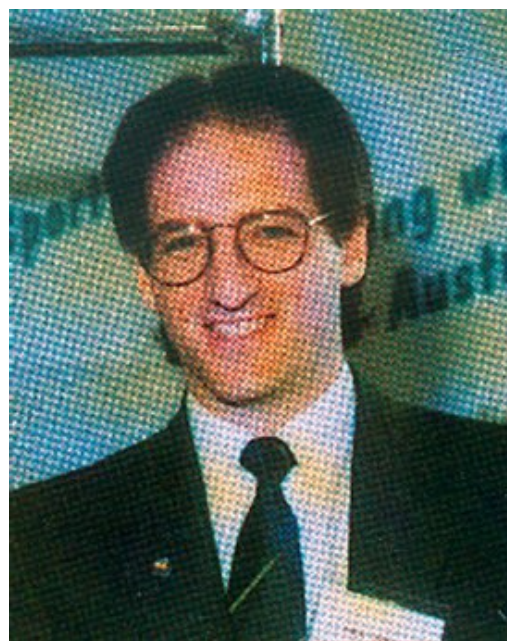
Touch was headed by traditional sport such as Tennis (1), Cricket (2), Golf (4) and Lawn Bowls (5). Of the 'Football' codes whilst Australian Football (3) and Soccer (7) were ahead of Touch, very significantly Touch's relatives, Rugby League (11) and Rugby Union (16) were behind Touch. The two other sports ahead of Touch were Netball (6) and Fishing (8).

As Paul Jonson stated, 'These results are important to Touch for a number of reasons. First, all these sports have a history many times longer than ours. Touch has been conducted as an organised game since 1968 when our first competition was held at Kensington's Snape Park by Souths Juniors. Compare this to all the other sports on the list which are ahead of us and most that are behind us and it is clear we are still very, very young.'

The findings of the survey, however, were significant for another reason. Jonson was keen to make much of this point in an editorial in the second edition of *In Touch*. He contended that the survey numbers did not fully reflect the extent of the real participant strength. Admittedly, this also was possibly true for a number of other sports on the list, it was especially so for Touch.

This was because Touch could be, and was, played just about anywhere, at any time, by anybody. Of course, that was one of Touch's greatest strengths. Also, there were a very large number of organised competitions that

did not appear in the statistics, because they did not choose to affiliate with the Australian Touch Association, and their respective state, territory or Australian Defence Forces body.



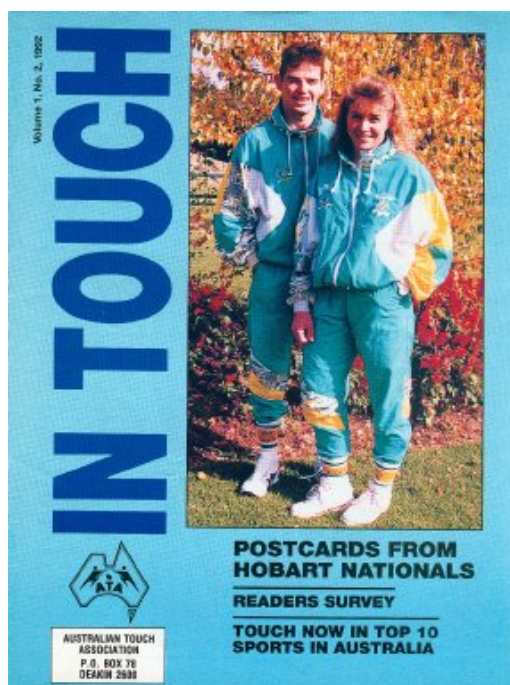
*Paul Jonson, ATA President from 1988-93. Paul did much, adding to the fine work of his predecessors in the role.*

Jonson went on to argue that 'If you played Touch last winter and this is your first magazine, then you played in one of these unaffiliated competitions. This magazine is our second and is a benefit of playing in an affiliated competition in the summer just passed. And it is only one of a large number of benefits of playing in an affiliated competition in the summer just past. It is only one of a large number of benefits that you receive by being a member of the ATA.'

He went on to explain that fees were also used for providing a comprehensive insurance cover in the event of an injury sustained whilst playing touch, support for the technical panel, which includes development in the areas of refereeing, coaching, seniors, juniors, women, selecting, and most importantly the game itself. 'Moreover', Jonson continued 'there also was the assistance provided for the administration and management of the sport to ensure that the competition in which players play was conducted in a way that would provide for the maximum enjoyment of all that participate, be that person player, referee, coach, manager, organiser, or, whatever.'

'This is to name just a few of the areas to which fees are applied. It also only represents the tip of the efforts of the very large number of committed persons at the local level which

week in, week out, organise our game of Touch.' Jonson was fully aware of the enormous task in attracting all Australian Touch players to, through their clubs and associations, affiliate with the ATA. This was to be one of the great challenges for the ATA during the 1990s and beyond.



*In itself signifying a milestone in the history of the sport, In Touch was introduced by the Australian Touch Association in 1991/92 and also acted as a device to bring the hundreds of thousands of unregistered Touch players onto the books.*

### ***The Australian Touch Association had come a long way in twelve years.***

As we have seen the inaugural meeting to form the Australian Touch Association was held in Sydney on 2 December 1978. Here representatives of New South Wales, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania were present.

There had been many changes in the structure of the ATA since that historic meeting and in 1992 its structure was made up as follows:

#### **General Committee:**

The committee consisted of one delegate from each State, Territory and the Australian Defence Forces (who were defined as a Constituent Body) and the ATA Executive. A Constituent Body was usually represented on the ATA General Committee by its current president.

The functions of the General Committee was to formulate policies, etc that would be enforced throughout the Touch community in Australia

#### **ATA Executive:**

The executive consisted of the President, two Vice-Presidents, Director of Finance (all voting members) and the ATA Executive Director.

The voting members of the ATA Executive were elected by the General Committee delegates every two years.

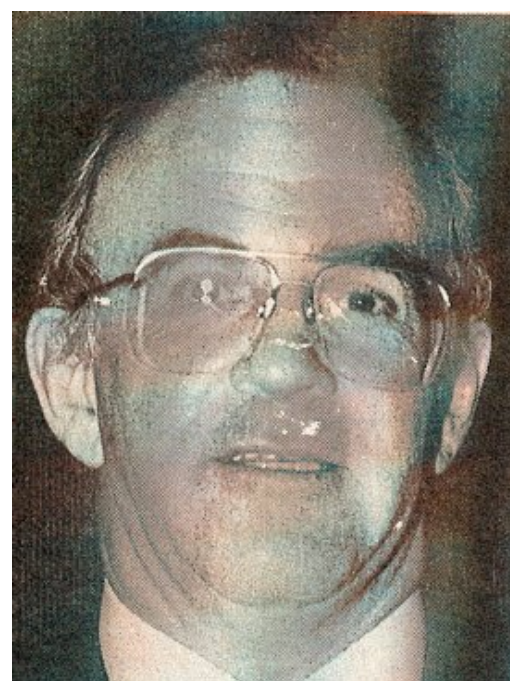
#### **ATA Office:**

There were six employees: The Executive Director, National Marketing Director, National Technical and Development Officer, an office administrator, clerical assistant and technical assistant.

#### **Technical Panel:**

The Technical Panel is made up of the National Technical Director, two assistant technical directors and a director of each arm of the technical area. The Executive Director and National Technical and Development Officer were ex-officio members of the panel.

Nominations were called for all positions on the Technical Panel every two years and the final appointments made by the ATA Executive.



*Ken Wells, Executive Director of the Australian Touch Association from 1988-1993.*

The ATA held administration seminars for Touch personnel who wished to be involved on committees at a district or state level.

The courses were usually held during weekends and consisted of up to two hours of lectures designed to cover topics that included meeting procedures, judicial matters and general administration procedures. No prerequisites were required for the course.

However, it became necessary for people who wished to be involved in Touch administration in States that received Government funding to undertake either this course or to obtain similar qualifications through the local Department of Sport and Recreation or the Australian Society of Sports Administrators'.

## ***The Hon. Ros Kelly, MP Keeps in Touch as She Opens Mungga-Iri House***

***On 18 September 1992 the Honourable Ros Kelly, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment, Sport and Territories, Member for Canberra, and Patron of the ATA opened Mungga-Iri House, the headquarters of Touch in Australia.***

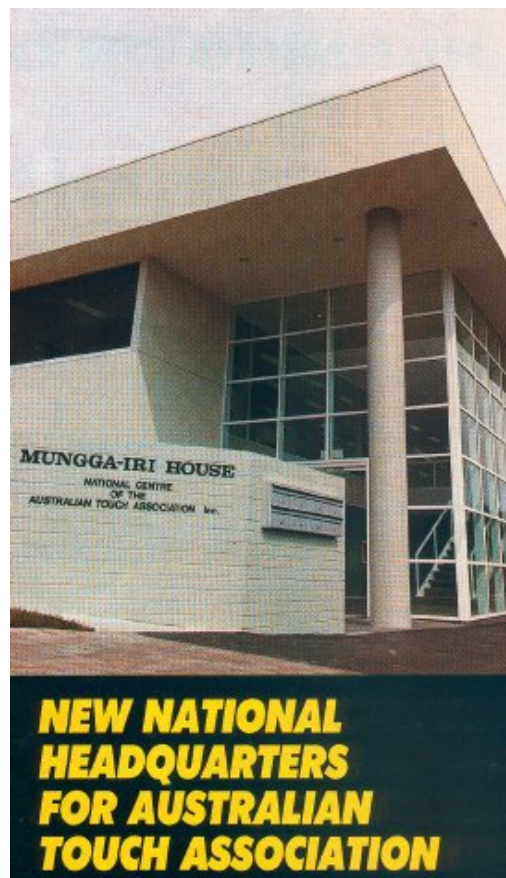
Clearly, the Australian Touch Association had reached another significant milestone in its history. Aply, Mungga-Iri House was named after the local Canberra Nonawal Aboriginal dialect word for touch/catch.

The completion of the building represented in many ways the sport's coming of age, and it was anticipated that it would serve as a platform upon which the sport could continue to build.

Many people contributed to the building, in particular the vision of the ATA's former president and executive director, Ken Wells, and former finance director, Dick Fairburn.

Ros Kelly was enthusiastic and delighted to be a part of the development. She began her opening address by declaring that 'As Patron

of the Australian Touch Association I am delighted to be here today for the official opening of this wonderful new building.'



Then she went on to point out that 'For a sport that was only founded in Australia fourteen years ago, to boast such a magnificent headquarters for the benefit of all of your members so quickly is a true indication of the growth of the sport and the dedication of all people involved in the development of Touch.'

Kelly stated that such growth has been recognised by the Federal Government, and was reflected in the financial assistance provided to the Australian Touch Association, which has increased from \$5,500 in 1980 to \$155,000 in this current financial year. This was a staggering increase of almost 3,000 per cent in twelve years.

Kelly explained that 'It is significant that the sport of Touch caters for, and provides opportunities for all Australians male and female, the young and the not so young.

Assisting sport at all levels is a fundamental part of the Government's current sports policy, with the broad aim to 'Maintain the Momentum', which sport has been able to

achieve during the 'Next Step' funding program, which took us through to the Barcelona Olympics.

'One of the major initiatives of the "Maintain the Momentum" program,' Kelly explained 'will be to encourage sporting organisations to take greater control over their own affairs through strategic planning, and development of a broader funding base incorporating registered members and the corporate sector.'

Astutely, she contended that 'Through the establishment of this one-million dollar facility, which incorporates income-generating opportunities, the administration of Touch in Australia is demonstrating increased professionalism and a commitment to its long-term development. The challenge is already being met, and I congratulate all those people who have been involved in this initiative.'

### ***Ken Wells recalls the realisation of the ATA Executive dream***

*Whilst I was President of the Australian Touch Association, I was employed as an Accountant with the Public Service in Canberra for the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC). Their role was to Plan and Develop Canberra. In the mid 1980s the NCDC had set aside some blocks of land in Deakin, about 4 kilometres from the Canberra CBD.*

*By working at the NCDC I was aware of the opportunity for Touch to apply for a block of land to be developed. I was also aware of this when I persuaded the Executive to move from Sydney to Canberra.*

*The deal with the land was that the purchase price was paid to the government (at about twenty per cent of the market value) over a period of time. We could build a two-storey building and have a headquarters for Touch on one floor. The only stipulation was that Touch had to occupy at least fifty per cent of the floor space.*

*Consequently, I convinced the Executive to apply for the land, and as I worked for the government, I knew all of the people that were responsible for the granting of the lease.*

*I then met with some developers. The proposal was that they would develop the site and retain half of the building, and Touch would own the other half. As Touch did not want the total space, negotiations were held and dispensation was given for Touch to occupy most of the top floor and lease out the remaining area.*

*I then left the ATA soon after the building's completion. The Australian Touch Association was now in a very healthy financial position, due mainly to the fact that it owns its own premises.*



*The Honourable Ros Kelly MP, and Paul Jonson at the opening of the National Headquarters of the ATA in Canberra.*

# 1993

## Trans-Tasman

*Played at Sydney's Tempe Velodrome between 8 and 12 May, one could be excused from reading the Sydney press that there was a media blackout on Trans-Tasman Touch series. Not even the match results were posted in the press.*

However, Dean Russell remembers the clash between Australia and New Zealand for the Trans-Tasman Trophy in 1993 will always be remembered for two things. The incredibly poor planning by the administrators of the ATA in respect of the timing of the event and the controversial results in the Men's and Mixed games.

To understand fully one must view the background leading up to this Fifth Trans-Tasman Test Series. The Administrators of the sport had scheduled the National Titles in May

1993, and while the States, Territories and the ADF would try their best it was always going to come down to a face off between the teams from New South Wales and Queensland in the Finals. The same two States would then provide a bulk of the members of the Australian teams. The players from both states however were focused on nothing else other than beating their counterparts from the other side of the border. Making the Test team and playing New Zealand was only a secondary consideration to the main event.

For reasons beyond belief of the Australian Touch public and despite the howls of dissent from the National Coaches and Coaching Panel the ATA in its infinite wisdom agreed to play the Kiwis in fully sanctioned Test Matches for the Trans-Tasman Trophy the day after the National finals.

Following a tough, demanding and passionate week of playing the best the nation had to offer the Australian teams were selected and announced at the after tournament function. Tired, fatigued, emotionally and mentally drained players were then whisked away from their team mates who they were either celebrating or commiserating with and placed in lockdown at the Novotel at Brighton 'as preparation' for the Tests. The fears of the



*Australian Men's Open: Back: Tim Vilialba, Steve Murphy, Mick Zalunardo, Wayne Bumbury, Ashley Heiniger  
Middle: Ian Rogers (manager), Tim Brown, Jamie Black, Patrick Grehan, Mick Christopher, Corey Foster, Peter McNeven (manager), Greg Newman (assist coach)  
Front: Sam Ayoub, Paul Dart, Scott Notley, Mark Boland, Shane Rigby*

coaches, already relayed to the administrators were being realised right there and then as players were far from happy in being removed from the function. So the day after a week of National competition, Australian teams with no training were to face fully prepared Kiwi teams.

### **Mixed Test Match**

Cary Thompson recants how the first rubber of the series was won in controversial circumstances by New Zealand and how they had never defeated Australia in a Test match until this day the 8th May 1993. After coaching Australia's Men's Masters team to a world record score of 32-0 at the 2001 World Cup, Lee Thompson was appointed coach of the Mixed team and became the first Australian Coach to lose a test match. The game was played in two halves with Australia skipping to a 2-0 lead at half time. In the second half New Zealand continually raided the Australian scoreline and was awarded a Touchdown which broke the spirit of the Australians although they still led 2-1.

A scoop from the New Zealand half and break over the scoreline to pass off to the winger who placed the ball just inside the Endzone Line was debated by the Australian players on two counts. First a touch was made on the half by Darrin Shelley and secondly the pass made by the half was two meters forward. The referee explained he had called the Australian player offside as he had not made the scoreline in order to make an effective touch.

Video evidence clearly showed the player was in the Touchdown Zone and was clearly therefore onside. The referee and line referees did not address the query re the forward pass but again the video showed it was clearly a forward pass. The Australians were dejected and allowed the poor decision to affect their game, a mistake they paid dearly for. New Zealand scored two more touchdowns and led 3-2 with seconds to go.

Australia was attacking their opponent's line when they turned the ball over and New Zealand started to come away from the danger area as the full time siren sounded. Excited substitute players, coaches and managers from the New Zealand Interchange Box streamed onto the field. The player in possession of the ball continued running the length of the field and placed the ball over the scoreline. With some fourteen players plus coaching staff from New Zealand interfering with the Australian defence and celebrating what was a great

victory for them the referees 'consulted each other in a very confused situation' and in the most stupid of refereeing decision ever made in any sport they awarded the touchdown.

The video of this game is used as a Referee's coaching tool to show up and coming aspiring International referees' what **not to do** when officiating at such important tournaments. Despite all this New Zealand had the first rubber on the board and gave the rest of their contingent great hope in bringing about a major upset and their first and to this day, their only Test series win against Australia.

### **Women's Test Match**

Australia showed their dominance in this game despite a gutsy effort by the visitors. The Kiwis took it to the Australian Womens team, but in the end the 2-0 score in favour of the home team was enough to secure the second rubber and even the balance of wins for the overall series trophy.

### **Men's Test Match**

The pinnacle of any Touch event is the Men's Open Final. The competitors fiercely defend their scoreline and brutally attack their opponents. As hard as they tried they could not combine as an effect force to prevent New Zealand scoring one touchdown. Nor could they combine as fighting unit to breach the defences of their opponents, thus losing their first International test to their cousins across the Tasman 1-0.

To this day no one can understand or explain how these matches were scheduled in this way. The Australian coaches had protested long and hard about the series timing, only to fall on deaf ears. Were the Australian administrators simply assuming that no matter what, Australia would win? Was it poor and unfounded arrogance that the Australian player was far superior and limited preparation would not matter? What ever they were thinking one thing is certain, after 1993 touch in Australia knew that New Zealand had arrived and never again would we go in under prepared against our friends from across the Tasman.

#### **1993 Fifth Trans-Tasman Series**

##### **Results**

##### **Men**

[New Zealand 1](#) [Australia 0](#)

##### **Mixed**

[New Zealand 4](#) [Australia 2](#)

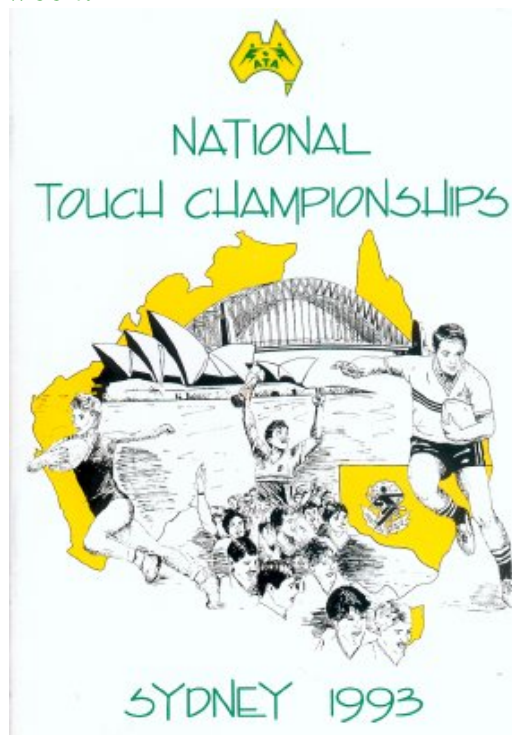
##### **Women**

[Australia 2](#) [New Zealand 0](#)

# 1993

## Twelfth National Championships

*If the Sydney press was quiet on the Trans-Tasman, it showed only miniscule improvement for the Nationals which was played at the same venue a week prior to the international event. Touch still occupied a small place in the collective media consciousness, particularly in Rugby League State of Origin week.*



David Vujanovic from the *Sunday Telegraph*, however, did interview Dean Russell before the event for some pre-event publicity:

*New South Wales Mixed Open Touch team will be aiming for the eighth National title in a row at the Tempe Velodrome in Sydney this week.*

*'The Mixed Open team has only been beaten once since 1985, and has the longest streak of winning games,' said NSW Touch Association development officer, Dean Russell.*

*'Queensland, in the last few years, have tended to improve their play. But New South Wales are still served by players such as Stacey White, who has been a member of the side since 1986.'*

*Russell said Touch offered spectators and players a game which included speed and ball-playing skills, with a minimum of body contact. 'We're finding in schools that a lot of parents and teachers even, are preferring that their children play Touch, rather than League or Union because of the minimum contact,' he said.*

*In the premier divisions of the men and Women's Open, competition could not be tighter. The New South Wales and Queensland Men's Open teams should reach the final in what is expected to be the highlight of the Tenth National Championships.*

When the Sydney media did choose to give the Nationals some further attention, a day after the Nationals had concluded, the story came with the backdrop of Rugby League, but nevertheless this was good publicity for the sport. Dean Ritchie and David Vujanovic from the *Sunday Telegraph* reported:

*Jason Gregory (the young rugby league star who doctors feared would never walk again) has made a miraculous sporting comeback. The former Gold Coast and Canberra halfback, who had his football career tragically cut short at the age of 21 when he suffered a broken neck, has defied the odds to compete at the Australian Touch Championships.*

*Millions of league fans watched in horror last year when, during a televised pre-season trial game between Gold Coast and Easts, young Gregory was involved in a tackle that went horribly wrong.*

*But the determined Gregory, now 23 is back playing football -- albeit, the Touch variety -- and his immense talent is there to see. Gregory played strongly in all matches at the Australian Touch Championships at Sydney last week, despite the threat of the mishap leaving him permanently disabled.*

*'I know by playing I could end up in a wheel chair or even die,' Gregory said yesterday. 'But that's the way I want to live my life -- I don't want to sit around feeling sorry for myself. I'm obviously not as competitive as I once was, but I'm giving Touch my best shot.'*

*'My options were severely reduced regarding employment -- I can only do about 50 per cent of the work I could do before.'*

*'But at least I'm not in a wheel chair and I have to be thankful for that.'*

*Gregory said that he was bed-ridden for eight months after the injury.*

*'I couldn't look after myself -- I couldn't shower myself or feed myself,' he said.*

*'Gradually I started getting a bit better and then I was well enough to get a spot of casual work. Later I started playing Touch footy and this (the National titles) is where it has led.'*

*'But it took me five or six months to even start running after the accident.'*

*Australian Touch official, Peter Staples, said 'Jason's always had the competitive edge.'*

*'He now plays Touch with just 25 per cent feeling in his left arm, but he plays well -- so well that he has made the second best Australian Touch team, despite his disability.'*

There was a clear message here for aspiring Touch players, endorsed by Dean Russell in his interview in the same paper a week before.



*Broken neck recovery: Jason Gregory, on his feet again and in the Touch Nationals. Photo courtesy of the Sunday Telegraph.*

### 1993 All-stars of Touch

Greg Young (Qld), Andy Yiangou (NSW), Ron Chilby (NSW), Teena Jennings (ADF), Darren Shelley (NSW), Katrina Maher (NSW), Mark Boland (NSW), Sharon Williams (Qld), Jeff Bartlett (NSW), Judy Malcolm (NSW), Gisell Tirado (NSW), Peter Marsh (Qld), Angela Daley (Qld), Stacey Gregory (NSW)

**Coach of the Year:** Peter Bell (Qld)

**Manager of the Year:** Ian Rogers (Qld)

**Referee of the Year:** Rick Bork (Qld)

**Official of the Year:** Bill Ker (Qld)  
(Executive Director)

### 1993 National Championship Final Results

#### Men

NSW 2 Queensland 1

#### Women

Queensland 1 0

#### Mixed

NSW 2 Queensland 1  
(Drop Off)

#### Men's 30

Queensland 1 NSW 0

#### Men's 35's

NSW 4 Queensland 1

#### Men's 40

NSW 3 Queensland



## ***Junior Trans-Tasman Series: NSW Clean Sweep***

***In September the four strongest Open Schools teams from Queensland, NSW Combined High Schools, NSW Catholic Colleges and New Zealand Secondary Schools came together to contest the Inaugural Trans-Tasman Secondary Schools Touch Series on the Gold Coast.***

The series came about to replace the Junior Open Nationals, which folded due to many Australian states and Territories opting only to support the U-16 Nationals. The Trans-Tasman Series was an initiative of the Queensland State Secondary Schools Touch Association and received the full support of the New Zealand Touch Association, which were very keen to further their links with Australian Schools touch competitions.

The Gold Coast was a perfect Touch venue, the new improvements to fields and facilities coupled with magnificent beach weather, making life more than bearable for the week.

The standard of Touch was first class and scores were always very close. Although Queensland Boys and Girls dominated early, once they acclimatised, there was marked improvement shown by the New Zealand teams and the two victorious New South Wales teams.

Presentations were made at the conclusion of the Series by Richard Munroe, ATA Director of Finance, Bill Ker, Executive Director QTA, and Australian Open Men's and Women's representatives, Patrick Grehan and Angela Barr.

### **Player of the Finals were:**

- Amanda Judd (NSWCCC)
- Richie Allan (NSWCHS)

### **Player of the Series were:**

- Sharyz Williams (Qld)
- Patrick Carney (Qld)

At the end of the evening two mixed teams were announced to play the New Zealand teams in exhibition games the following morning. The Series concluded with a few words and a song from the New Zealand guests. This was well received by the excellent crowd.

Peter Bell, the series organiser, was extremely pleased with the success of the concept and was looking to expand the series in future years. The Aussies would set off to travel to Auckland for the return series in 1994.

Ten years down the track Peter Bell saw this development as being vital to the future of the sport. 'It gave all secondary schools an elite target to aim at for individual excellence, and was to prove an outstanding breeding ground for future champions. Witness names such as Gabby Maher, a future Australian player, in the teams listed below.'

The two mixed teams announced were:

### **Invitation 14**

Ken Higginbottom (NSWCCC), Scott Leavy (NSWCCC), David Zimmerle (Qld), Brendon Frazer (Qld), Adam Hamilton (NSWCHS), Brett Quilan (NSWCHS), Lisa Trindall (NSWCHS), Karina Castle (NSWCHS), Tanya Murphy (Qld), Deanne Wilkinson (Qld), Amanda Judd (NSWCCC), Dominique Maher (NSWCCC), Melinda Guthrie (NSWCCC)

### **President's 14**

Trent McDonald (Qld), Carlin Burns (Qld), Douglas Thaiday (Qld), Patrick Carney (Qld), Richard Allan (NSWCHS), Shane Allen (NSWCHS), Kelly Cotterill (NSWCHS), Kylie Wardrobe (NSWCHS), Loretta Donovan (NSWCHS), Sharyn Williams (Qld), Lindy Smith (Qld), Kristy Judd (NSWCCC), Gabrielle Maher (NSWCCC)

### **Junior Trans-Tasman Series**

#### **Results**

#### **Semi Finals**

#### **Boys**

QSSTA 6      NZSS 1  
NSWCHS 4      NSWCCC 2

#### **Girls**

QSSTA 6      NZSS 1  
NSWCCC 7      NSWCHS 3

#### **Finals**

#### **Boys**

NSWCHS 2      QSSTA 1

#### **Girls**

NSWCCC 3      QSSTA 1

## ***U-16 National Championships: Queensland Avenged***

***The week following the Trans-Tasman Series involving the Open School players the U16s took to the fields in Perth.***

The venue for the event was Wellington Square in the heart of the Perth Business District, which brought back memories for some Touch enthusiasts of the ATA Nationals in 1987.

The fields also happened to be opposite the State Government buildings. The tournament was good entertainment for the many public servants and office workers on long lunches.

The standard of play was extraordinary and Peter Young and Rick Borg, two level-6 referees brought over from Queensland were suitably impressed. Many of these junior stars undoubtedly found their way into the senior ranks sometime in the near future.

Usually, one would expect Queensland and New South Wales to dominate and the fact that both made the finals did not show the closeness of many of the games contested by the developing States.

The Western Australian girls came within an ace of upsetting their more fancied rivals from Queensland. The final score of 2-all made history for the locals and they were also unlucky in their 2-4 loss to New South Wales.

In the Boys, South Australia defeated the Australian Capital Territory who turned around and beat New South Wales in a cliff hanger. Northern Territory overcame Western Australia by one but the locals in turn, defeated South Australia. It was the sort of competition where any team could beat the other, and did so.

In the finals, Queensland avenged the defeats of their older team mates on the Gold Coast a week earlier by crushing NSW 3-1 in the Girls, and just getting home in the dying moments 3-2 in the boys. New South Wales Boys showed a lot of courage to come back from their astounding 7-1 round loss to Queensland.

Peter Bell praised the event, especially for the fact that it did much to popularise the sport in the West, which, despite the AFL fanaticism in that state, possessed an extremely strong following of the rugby codes, especially from people with British and South African backgrounds. It was clear that Touch would have a bright future in this part of Australia.

At the conclusion of the Championship the following players received awards:

### **Player of the Finals**

- Dean Jackson (Qld)
- Amanda Thomas (Qld)

### **Player of the Series**

- Peter Marsh (Qld)
- Angela Daley (Qld)

### **Encouragement Award**

- Steven Kirby (ACT)
- Rochelle Moore (WA)

### **Commonwealth All Stars**

The Commonwealth Bank also provided sponsorship for this event and the Commonwealth All Stars teams were announced:

### **Boys**

Craig Brown (Qld), Peter Marsh (Qld), Matthew Offord (NSW), Tim Donovan (NSW), Ata Isarabhakdi (ACT), Dean Eveston (ACT), Nathan Wiseman (SA), Steve Jarrett (WA), Chris Sheehan (WA), Joel McLennon (NT), Justin O'Shea (NT)

### **Girls**

Angela Daley (Qld), Amanda Thomas (Qld), Kobie Jones (NSW), Michelle Bolt (NSW), Melissa McMahon (ACT), Kimberley Stewart (ACT), Imogen Moore (SA), Shevaun Bruland (SA), Shelly Matcham (WA), Melissa Campbell (WA), Karlene Savage (NT), Gina Garling (NT)

### **U-16 National Championship Results 1993**

#### **Boys**

Queensland 3                      NSW 2

#### **Girls**

Queensland 3                      NSW 1

# **1994 The Fourteenth National Championships: controversy flares as Queensland lose**

***New South Wales clinched the Australian Men's Open Touch championship by beating Queensland 3-2 with a controversial extra-time touchdown at Southport.***

With the score tied at 2-2 at the end of normal time, the game went into a drop-off situation in which one player from each team drops out of the game every two minutes until a touchdown is scored. The *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported:

*The extra-time period was less than a minute old when Wayne Bambury scored a touchdown despite calls from the Queensland camp that he had been touched before they forced the ball down.*

*Queensland coach, Cameron Powell, said the controversial touchdown should not have been allowed to count. The referee who was closest to the play ruled that he (Bambury) had been touched, but the referee on the other side ruled that he hadn't.*

*The field referee went on the ruling of the guy who was 50 metres away, rather than the one who was on the spot.*

*'You can coach for all sorts of scenarios, but you can't coach for that.'*



*Wayne Bambury runs it out, with Steven Murphy in support. Scott Pierce stands firm in defence.*

*'But I guess when you get a call like that, you've just got to wear it.'* Powell said that his team had been the more dominant of the two.

*'We were in control throughout the whole match, but we made a couple of mistakes and we got punished for them,'* he said.

*The final, which was played at a hectic pace from the start, was less than a minute old when Dave Raper put Queensland ahead. However, seconds later, Michael Zalunardo went over in the corner for the equaliser.*

*George Kokkotas made it 2-1 to New South Wales midway through the first half. The score remained that way until, with just seven minutes remaining Scott Pierce dived over in the corner. New South Wales coach, Doc Newman, was delighted with his charges and was quick to praise Queensland for their mighty effort. 'It's always an even contest between New South Wales and Queensland,' he said. 'They're two great sides and the fact that it boiled down to a drop-off shows how little separates them.'*

*Ironically, Queensland also lost to New South Wales in the drop-off situations in the Women's Open and the Mixed Open finals.*

Don Hawthorn from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported on the lead-up matches for the finals:

*Queensland and New South Wales will battle it out in the Men's and Women's Open grand finals of the Australian Touch championships ...*

*The Men's team sealed their grand final berth with a hard-fought 4-2 semi-final win over the Australian Defence Force last night, while the Women cruised to a 13-0 win over Western Australia in their semi-final.*

*In the Men's semi-final, Queensland, who beat South Australia in their last round robin game, began with a touchdown by Scott Pierce after two minutes. Little separated the two teams for the remainder of the half, with both coming close to scoring on several occasions.*

*Queensland made it 2-0 shortly after the break*



**New South Wales Mixed:**

*Back: Jason Hunt, Stacey Gregory, Scott McLeod, Craig Nicholls, Renee Randell, Lorraine Caruana, Darren Shelley, Laurie Horder, Vicki Theos, Gerard McShane, Peter del Monte (Assistant Coach), Jeff Aldrige (Coach)  
Middle: Michelle Boland, Rick Lewis, Debbie Biddolph Front: Kane Weeks (Manager)*

through Paul Dart, while Craig Pierce scored soon after to give the Maroons a 3-0 lead.

The ADF got one back through Jim Barrows, but the comeback was short-lived, with Patrick Grehan scoring less than a minute later. Grehan and ADF player, Scott Betteridge, were sin-binned for five minutes for a minor altercation soon after. Noel Collison took advantage to score for ADF to make it 4-2.

Queensland coach, Cameron Powell, said his team was capable of playing much better. 'We were a bit short of the mark,' he said.

'We didn't adjust to their attacking patterns well, but at least we're in the grand final now.' New South Wales advanced to the grand final with a gutsy 5-2 win over the Australian Capital Territory, who led twice early on.

Although Queensland beat New South Wales 2-0 in their round robin clash, Powell does not see his team as favourites in today's finals. New South Wales are the defending champions, so we're the underdogs as far as I'm concerned,' he said.

In the lead-up publicity to the Nationals, the Queensland brothers Bob and Laurie Brindell were highlighted in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*:

*Brothers Bob and Laurie Brindell aim to help the Queensland Men's Open representative team win the Nationals Touch championships ... Bob, 28, and Laurie, 27, have been playing Touch together for years at both club and State levels, and are lining up for the Maroons again after a three-years.*



The Australian team assembles after being announced at the conclusion of the Nationals.



**New South Wales Women's Open:**

*Back: Janine Miller, Kellie Smith, Lynelle Hardy, Giselle Toirado, Jennie Williams, Silvana Corti, John Collins, Justine Smith, Dennis Shelley.*

*Front: Debbie Egan, Paula Vassalo, Kitty Maher, Gabby Maher, Jody Collins, Nicole McLaglan, Cristy Hornery, Joy Collins (Manager).*



***Beach Touch:  
Sand, sweat and sizzling  
speed***

***The concept was quite different,  
even radical with regard to park  
touch ... fast and furious, with  
the emphasis on attack and  
scoring!***

With the support of Carlton United Breweries, Coca-Cola, 2Day FM and Reebok, Wanda and Maroubra beaches were transformed from a place to catch some rays of sweet summer sunshine into a hive of activity, action and interest. Maybe not quite rivaling the Beach Volleyball atmosphere in Rio De Janerio, but certainly the potential was there for Beach Touch to explode. It offered everything Australians associate with sport, sand and surf.

A relaxed, yet competitive, atmosphere. This was surely a winner! The concept was quite different even radical with regard to park touch, fast and furious with the emphasis on attack and scoring,

but one that all those who entered agreed with. By the time the State finals rolled on 13 February at Maroubra, whilst still maintaining the element of fun, one could sense that there was a far more serious attitude to the games on that day. With each team in the three divisions earning the right to be on the beach that day the competition was spellbinding. Everyone had their own idea who would be King and Queen of the Beach.

The first of the finals was in the Mixed Division, with two teams of youngsters from Cronulla to be the combatants. At the half it was even at 4-all. But the second half saw the Raiders turn up the heat to finish winners 9-4 over The Jackson Five. Without a doubt, NSW Women-s 20s player, Karen Hall, outshone all on the beach and was easily best on the sand in the first final.

Where the Mixed was a local derby between two Cronulla teams the Women's was between the two Eastern Suburbs teams. The Fuzy Ducks made up of players from State Champions, Easts Women's Open, and the Iso Sport team from East's Women 20s. Some of the smart money was saying that the youngsters, led by the Judd twins and Melinda Guthrie, would upset their



*A Bear chasing a Shark out of water: Greg Florimo of North Sydney Bears RL, chasing Andrew Ettinghausen of Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks RL at the launch of Beach Touch.*

more illustrious opponents. Touchdown for touchdown the two teams went until, with 23 seconds left and Iso Sport trailing by one, attacking the Fuzzy Ducks' line Giselle Tirado managed to knock down an Iso Sport pass, quickly re-gather and put Debbie Egan away down the wing. Nomai Laing looked to have Egan covered until she delivered a perfectly timed pass inside Tirado who turned up in support to score. Final score the Fuzzy Ducks 9, Iso Sport 7.

All good scripts leave the best to last and this was certainly the fact for the Hot Summer of Touch. The Men's Open Final filled with State and Australian Players was a scintillating affair, with some exquisite touchdowns. Like two boxers standing toe-to-toe exchanging blows, such was the action of the final. At full time the scores were tied 11-all.

Time for the shoot-out and still neither team would give an inch: 12-all, 13-all, 14-all ... and so the battle continued. It was turning out to be a war of attrition. Finally, with the score at 18-17 to Petty Coat Junction, and the Beachboys needing to score, Gary Toohey knockdown, Cameron Foster, pass to Darren Shelley to ensure victory. The concept? All agreed that it was a success! And many were sure that the sport of Beach Touch would be ready to take off on a crest of a wave!



*The winning touchdown. Action-a-plenty to equal the best in Beach Volley Ball.*

### Beach Touch Results

#### Men's Open

Petty Coat Junction 18 Beach Boys 17

#### Women's Open

Fuzzy Ducks 9 Iso Sport 7

#### Mixed Open

Raiders 9 Jackson Five 4



*Mixed Touch is a feature of this Australian beach phenomena. Florimo outwits Jennie Williams and Stacey Gregory.*

## Beach Touch The Differences

1. No rollball. Simply touch the ground with the ball and effect a pass.
2. Each tap-off is from the mid-point of the scoreline, not halfway.
3. Three metres to be onside at play the ball, not five.
4. Five metres to be onside at infringements, not ten.
5. Five players per team, not fourteen.
6. Only three attacking players allowed on the field at the one time, not seven.
7. Only two defending players allowed on the field at the one time, not seven.
8. Substitutes to be seated, not moving along the sideline.
9. Attacking teams cannot allow the ball to touch the ground unless being touched. If a defender prevents an attack from completing a pass and causes the ball to go to ground then there is a change of possession. The onus is on the attacking team to hold on to the ball. If the defender knocks it down, their team gets possession.
10. Only a defender can effect a touch, not the attacker.
11. Failure to effect a touch by a defender can result in six again, a five meter territorial advantage and/or both.
12. Players sent off can be replaced, depending on the referee; the sent-off player may or may not be able to participate in the remainder of the game.
13. Five minutes each way.

So have a go everyone !



## ***Talent Identification Program: Touch looks to the future at the elite end***

The ATA's National Selectors Director, and Chairperson of the Talent Identification Program, Ian Stanley, reported to the ATA's AGM that the Talent Identification Scheme (TID) was initiated to fulfill a number of roles for Touch. The Talent Identification Program (TIP), which encompasses the national training squads (NTS) and their associated activities, and the identification process, whereby potential new players to Touch were identified utilising other national schemes such as Sports Search in schools and other areas.

Stanley explained that initially, the TIP provided elite Touch players with an advanced program, and an opportunity to benefit from the sport that they had contributed to over the years. The TID, moreover, provided not only for potential elite players, but also a growing number of participants to the sport with the identified attributes suitable to become potential elite players.

The scheme commenced in late 1993, while the gathering of player data started at the 1991 FIT World Cup in Auckland. An integral part of the TIP scheme was the Players' Program, whereby the selected players participated in camps where they received all the benefits of the combined knowledge of the ATA elite coaches and the staff of the AIS in areas beneficial to their sport.

By the end of 1994 there had been three highly successful camps, utilising both the AIS (two) and the Gold Coast Cup Tournament for both specialist training and player evaluation.

During these camps all available resources were utilised in areas such as in-depth player interviews, psychological preparation and physiological evaluation, testing and correction, with highly developed training programs being provided to the players. All data that was gathered from this program was utilised to formulate a set of norms, or standards, which were then distributed to the affiliates for utilisation in their State TID programs and/or State team selections. This was collated for presentation to the affiliates after the National Championships.



**May 1994 National Training Squad**

*This was a deciding epoch in the sport in Australia.*

Stanley stressed that to further enhance the program and participate in its success, there was an urgent need for each Affiliate to establish their own State TID program in order to develop their own players. Consequently, the ATA would have ready access to players to implement in the National scheme.



*Nine years down the track and the fruits of the labour: Ian Stanley, photographed here at the 2003 World Cup in Japan, observes how his charges had developed over the past ten years.*

The participants in the scheme were identified initially while playing Touch at ATA tournaments, State championships, or those tournaments designated by the various affiliates for TID purposes.

#### **Selection criteria:**

- be a current or a prospective State/Territory player
- have above average playing ability at a National level
- display a high standard of behaviour, both on and off the field
- be available to meet the full commitments of the National Talent Squad program.

The identification process was conducted initially by the ATA National Selectors' Panel in conjunction with the National Coaching Panel, National Technical and Development Officer and the appointed National Coaches. This was then expanded to include all State/Territory Coaches and selected Level 2 coaches.

The number of players chosen was divided as:

- Men 25
- Women 25
- Mixed 25 (15 men, 10 women)
- Under 17 10 (5 boys, 5 girls)
- Under 19 20 (20 boys, 10 girls)
- Under 21 30 (15 boys, 15 girls)

Total of 75 participants

This identification process had been conducted initially by the ATA National Selectors' Panel in conjunction with the National Coaching Panel and the appointed National coaches. This then expand to include all state development Officers, state coaches, nominated Level-2 selectors and selected Level-2 coaches.

Stanley explained that the ATA National training squads were created to provide the participants with quality on-going development in three areas:

- physical training through individualised fitness assessment and injury prevention;
- psychological preparation, stress management, concentration, relaxation techniques, time management and other related areas; and
- skill development at the individual, sub-unit and team levels.

Additionally, the squads provided for access to coaching specialists in these three areas through centralised camp structures or individual programs.

By October 1994 the squads had undergone three reviews, with changes being made and will be reviewed at the 1994 National Championships.

Thus, the squads reflect the best twenty-one elite and four development players prior to the Australian Teams being announced to contest the 1995 World Cup.

Each squad comprised twenty-one elite players and four development players. The development players were changed every twelve months following the National Championships and at any other time if they did not maintain the criteria.

Stanley confidently predicted that the TIP would do much to carry Touch into the twenty-first century at an elite national level.

# 1995 Third World Cup

*World Cup  
held in  
Honolulu: a  
Grand Slam  
Victory for  
Australia.*



Australia sent 130 players and seven teams to contest the 3rd Touch World Cup held in Honolulu, Hawaii from 20-26 March.

Any doubts as to who was the world's leading Touch nation were quickly put to rest when Australia won all seven finals, a remarkable achievement by any international sporting standards. In a great week for Australian Touch, the national squad secured the Men's, Women's

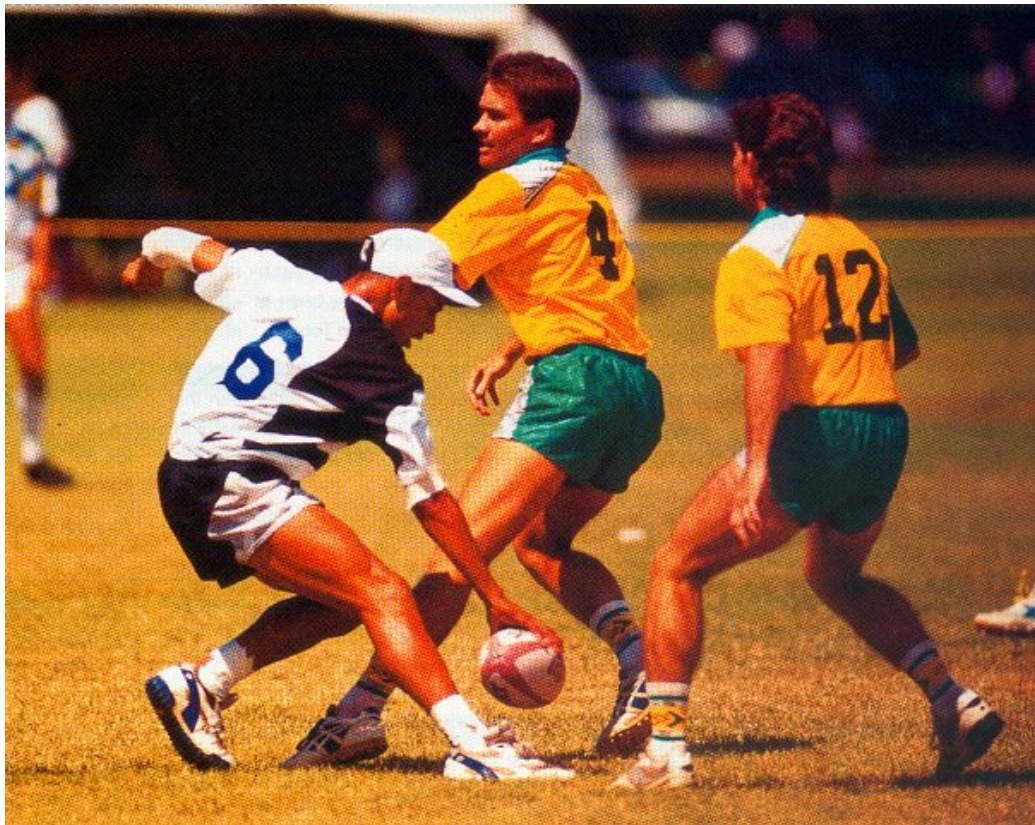
and Mixed Opens, the Men's 30s, 35s and 40s and Women's 30s divisions. During the week the seven teams contested a total of 60 games and only lost three.

Held once every four years the World Cup is the real showpiece event in world Touch. As we have read already in this book the previous World Cup was held in Australia in 1988 and in New Zealand in 1991.

The '95 World Cup hosted a record number of 43 teams from 11 nations. Participating nations included Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Amerika Samoa, Western Samoa, Tonga, Niue, South Africa, USA, Japan and Cook Islands. For Tonga, South Africa, USA and for Amerika Samoa this was their first Cup.

By 1995 there were 14 nations affiliated with the Federation of International Touch and to see 11 in attendance at this cup was reassurance that the game was certainly progressing on the international front.

The Cup was hosted by USA Touch Association affiliated back in 1988 and coached by Cary Thompson. In the USA, Touch has developed as



*Scott Notley and Shane Rigby double defend against New Zealand.*

a by-product of their 100,000 strong Rugby Union community and while the game continues to grow, its popularity is being restricted by inconsistent rules and informal structure. 'We're only a minnow country by world standards', explained USA Men's Open captain and former Rugby Union International, Tony Sameniego.

'This Cup is really a learning exercise for us. Flag football is our most popular Touch code, only because it's more established. But Touch Rugby is a better game and more and more players are taking it up all the time. This Cup will be a huge boost to our sport.'

### **A Venue Well Chosen.**

Over the years, Hawaii, the 50th State of the USA, had developed into a real Mecca for visiting Touch teams. Hawaii is the holiday playground of the Pacific and provides the perfect setting for an international sports carnival. Apart from the obvious aesthetic attractions, the Federation of International Touch chose Hawaii for its strategic positioning at the centre of the Pacific and as a launching pad into the Northern Hemisphere. The fact that four nations sent television crews to Hawaii tends to support the Hawaiian decision.

### **Spectacular Opening Ceremony.**

Day one of the tournament began with a formal march past ceremony through Honolulu. Led by the US Marine Band, the 11 nations marched past Hawaii's famous Waikiki Beach finishing at the picturesque playing fields of Kapiolani Park.

### **No Holiday for the Aussies**

Despite the obvious distractions that come with a tropical paradise, for most of the Australian players Hawaii was no holiday. The three open teams especially had dedicated two years towards these titles and this included everything from fitness, drills, training camps, and Institute of Sport seminars. The Australians came here expecting nothing less than Gold.

It is no secret that Australia and New Zealand are the two powers of world Touch. Between them they consume almost a million players and it surprised nobody to see them contesting all seven finals. The spectacular growth of the game in Australia and New Zealand has largely fuelled the development of the game internationally.

During the first three days of the tournament the teams contested preliminary rounds before

moving into the all important semi finals and finals on days four and five. While each team averaged only two games a day the 33 degree heat made it far more demanding.



*A very relaxed Men's 30s team.*

The four Australian senior teams dominated the opposition and their experience clearly showed against many of the younger Touch nations. The Men's 40s had an easy run through the pool winning their first five games by a combined score of 54 to 5. They faced New Zealand in the final, running out very comprehensive winners 14-0.

The Men's 35s were even more impressive winning their seven pool games by a combined score of 121-7, including a record 31 point win over a hapless USA. They beat New Zealand 8-0 in the semi-final and then again 8-1 in the final.

The Men's 30s won their five pool games by a combined score of 67-1. They had a close 4-0 win over New Zealand in the semis, but then powered home in the final, beating New Zealand again 9-2.

The Women's 30s team had a similar story, winning their first seven games by a total score of 98 to 5. They were never seriously challenged, beating New Zealand 9-1 in the semi and then 6-2 in the final. After Australia had won the four senior divisions all attention moved to the three open divisions where New Zealand was expected to be far more competitive.

The first Opens final was the Mixed. The Australian Mixed Open team had six wins and just one loss during their pools campaign. They lost 1-2 to a very committed New Zealand team in round 5.

However, it was a different ball game in the semi-final where Australia made a remarkable

comeback to beat New Zealand 7-0. As expected the tenacious New Zealanders returned to face Australia in the final and with a win a piece, the game was expected to be a very even



*The feelings of the Aussie girls was obvious when New Zealand failed to show up for the semis. Renee Clark, Giselle Tirado and Maria McWhitter.*

contest.

Unfortunately for the players, the afternoon sea breeze failed to materialise. The heat was a critical factor, with regular substitution being the order of the day. Early in the Mixed final Australia's Darren Shelley broke out from half to put Greg English in to score. Melissa Pitfield then scored the second touchdown after a tremendous run from English. Then just before the half, Shelley dummied his way into a gaping hole scoring a great individual touchdown. Australia went to the break with a comfortable 3-0 lead.

The second half proved to be a far more even contest. New Zealand replied with an early touchdown and at 3-1 it looked like the Aussies were in for a real battle. However the Australians prevailed, sealing their 4-1 victory with a late touchdown to Jason Hunt after another superb pass from Darren Shelley. Shelley had a phenomenal game and Australia did very well in beating what was a very competitive New Zealand outfit.

After the Mixed came the Women's Open final. If there was a standout team in the Australian squad it had to be the Women's Open team. All week their fast, attacking game had been attracting plenty of admirers and the girls moved effortlessly through the pools outgunning their opposition by a total of 67-2.

Once again it was the New Zealanders who presented their only serious threat. Australia only beat them 2-1 in a very even pool game and everyone expected a tough final.

New Zealand began the psychological contest by forfeiting their semi-final clash, a decision that angered the Australian players and a number of leading officials. However, New Zealand prevailed and returned to meet Australia in the final.

The Australians began the game in spectacular fashion with team speedster Giselle Tirardo setting up Renee Clark for the opening score just minutes into the game. Australia's Sharyn Williams then ran 30 metres in a brilliant solo effort to score the second touchdown. Williams was proving difficult to contain and it was not long before she split the defence again for her second touchdown. Australia looked very impressive and went to the half with a commanding 3-0 lead.

The girls carried their good form into the second half and it was not long before the flood gates began to open. Tirardo scored the fourth touchdown while the fifth came from a very clever Renee Clark intercept. The speed of the Australians really troubled the Kiwis and they totally dominated the territory.

Next it was Giselle Tirardo who out sprinted the cover to score her second touchdown, while Renee Clark scored her trifecta after some great lead up work from Paula Vassallo.

New Zealand scored a consolation touchdown late in the game to take the score to 7-1 but the Aussies had the last reply with a touchdown to Kristy Judd who scored from a sweet Lynelle Hardy pass. The Australians ran out convincing 8-1 winners. Undoubtedly on that form, the Australians would have given many of the lesser Men's Open teams a good run for their money. The girls actually declined a challenge game from the USA Men's Open team, and thankfully so, for the girl would have certainly damaged some egos.

### **Women's Lycra Green and Gold Suits Turn Heads!**

The Women's Open team proved a smash hit in more ways than one. With their revolutionary body suits and their dynamic play, they really stole the World Cup spotlight. The lycra green and gold suits were designed to be both practical and head turning, and head turning they were. There were certainly a number of sore necks by the end of the week. Coach, Peter Bell, it seems had the most sought-after job in Hawaii!

Throughout the week the girls seemed quite embarrassed by all the attention directed their way. 'We're just not used to all the fuss,' said a coy Katrina Maher, captain of the team. 'We never get this type of attention at home.' And unfortunately that was the sad truth of the matter. If Hawaii was any indication, then this team would surely figure prominently in any future promotional efforts.

Despite an impressive international field the Men's Open division was always going to be a contest between heavyweight contenders, Australia and New Zealand.

The Australian squad was on a roll, having won six out of six finals and with only the main event to come, the men suddenly found themselves under great pressure to secure the Grand Slam. On the other hand, the Kiwis had endured six successive final defeats and all hopes were now pinned on their red hot Men's Open team. The Kiwis beat the Australian Men's Open team 2-3 in the pools and then again 4-6 in the semi finals and went into the final as clear favourites. Some quarters suggested the Australians may have been foxing. Either way, a genuine feeling of concern had crept into the Australian camp, as they had been soundly beaten thus far in the tournament by New Zealand.



*Australia's Corey Foster makes it look so easy.*

This was by far the strongest New Zealand team ever assembled and some felt Australia's reign was about to end. It was very interesting to note the contrast in styles between the two teams. Man-for-man, the Kiwis appeared faster right across the paddock, and their superior attacking flair was in stark contrast to the teamwork and clinical precision of the Australians. Australia

moved into the final courtesy of a very strong 8-0 semi-final win over Western Samoa.

### **Aussies Elite Athleticism in the Finals**

While the majority of Australians play Touch for recreation, there is no use telling these elite athletes that Touch is only a game. These players have carried the game to a new dimension. The build up to the final had all the intensity of a Bledisloe Cup challenge, and the lively New Zealand Hakka set the scene for a classic World Cup encounter.

The match began at a furious pace with each team racing from one end of the field to the other with each change of possession. The Kiwis struck first blood, justifying their favouritism with a very soft touchdown to Mark Murray. The signs looked ominous for Australia. The rest of the half developed into a dogged defensive encounter as each team desperately tried to hold the other out. New Zealand certainly had the better of the first stanza and dominated the territory. Their superior speed certainly troubled the Australians who were continually caught on the back pedal.

New Zealand went to the half with a slender 1-0 lead, with the Australians lucky not to be further behind.

The final was certainly a tale of two halves. After a furious half-time speech from coach, Peter McNeven, the Australians returned to the field a different team. The Australians had to score first. In fact they scored from the opening drive when Mark Boland broke out of half to put team captain, Scott Notley, in for the leveller.

From then on the momentum began to shift Australia's way. Australia's second touchdown came after Bobby Brindell threw a great pass to Boland who caught the opposition napping as he dived under the defence to score. This touchdown really seemed to unsettle the Kiwis. Uncharacteristic errors began to creep into their game while the more composed Australians began to take control.

Craig Pierce then sliced through an opening and found the ever wary Boland backing up again for his second crossing. Suddenly, the Kiwi's 1-0 advantage had been reduced to a 1-3 deficit. Craig Pierce then scored the fourth touchdown after some great lead up work from Bob Brindell.

The game really took on a new dimension when a surprising fight broke out. The heat was really pushing tempers to the limit. The aggressive Kiwis were behind on the scoreboard and they were getting very frustrated by a watertight Australian defence.

What began as a minor push-and-shove between two players quickly escalated into a full-scale Mexican stand off. Players raced from each end of the park and squared up for a 14-a-side game, something that people do not see everyday in a game of Touch.

Any doubts as to the intensity of the game were put to rest. For a few brief moments it looked as though Touch was about to face a very ugly international incident.

Thankfully, sanity prevailed and tempers cooled enough for each team to retreat to their respective corners. The incident seemed to shock the crowd and they suddenly came roaring to life.

Minutes after play recommenced the Australians were in again when perennial wingman, Mike Zalunardo, made a spectacular dive for the corner. The Australian crowd went delirious as Australia finished with an amazing come from behind 5-1 victory and a seven from seven Grand Slam.

‘Well it just doesn’t get much better than this,’ said a jubilant Bill Ker, Executive Director of the Australian Touch Association. ‘It’s really been a great day for Australian Touch’.

In the end it was the young New Zealand team that lost the game, rather than the Australians winning it. However, nothing could be taken away from the Australians. They were clearly the better team on the day and played a far more disciplined, mistake-free game.

While the Kiwis certainly appeared to have more offensive strike power, their inexperience really let them down.

Young Kiwi sensation, Remos Gentles, was voted the tournaments most valuable player; his elusive stepping was sometimes freakish, and he was certainly a real star of the tournament.

## **World Cup Universally Claimed a Huge Success**

The Hawaiian World Cup was certainly a huge success and is a real credit to the Federation of International Touch. Like the sport itself, the World Cup has enormous potential to grow. The Cup certainly took the game of Touch onto the international stage and went a long way towards establishing international credibility and due recognition for the game.

PNG must be commended for their efforts in bringing six teams to this event, a remarkable achievement for such a small nation. South Africa, in their rookie season, showed enough to suggest they will be a real force in years to come. While they still had a lot to learn, they had a team chockfull of talent, with a number of



*The World Cup displayed and beautifully framed.*

brilliant individuals.

Their game was rapidly expanding at home and they were looking to become a major player in world Touch. Host nation USA fielded an under-strength team, with many of their leading players in camp for the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens. Despite some landslide losses they never lost their sense of adventure.

They really put in a spirited effort and were wonderful hosts for the event. Sadly, despite their world standing, the victorious Australian teams returned home in relative obscurity.

### 1995 World Cup Final Results

#### Men's Open

Australia 5                      New Zealand 1

#### Women's Open

Australia 8                      New Zealand 1

#### Mixed

Australia 4                      New Zealand 1

#### Men's 30

Australia 9                      New Zealand 2

#### Women's 30

Australia 6                      New Zealand 2

#### Men's 35

Australia 8                      New Zealand 1

#### Men's 40

Australia 14                      New Zealand 0

## **Three Nation's Cup: Japanese Tour for the Australian Mixed Open**

**What was meant to be a four-nations tournament turned out to be a three-nations tournament, with New Zealand pulling out at the last minute. In regard to the out-balanced score line, Assistant Coach on the tour, Bill Ker assessed the value of the tour:**

*The Australian Touch Association selected a mixed team to participate in the 1995 Three Nations Tournament which was staged in Tokyo. Initially, the competition was to be four nations, however New Zealand could not attend and this left Australia Japan and Great Britain to participate in this event.*

*Players were selected from the available elite players and the following people went on this very exciting tour of Japan. Trevor Richards the then Director of Finance for the ATA led the Tour and I represented the Federation of International Touch as well as assisted Trevor with the tour managers role. The team had a great balance of new blood and experienced players and was well coached by*

*Lee Thompson the National Coach. The then groomet of the tour, Mattie Curran, has gone onto become an integral player in the Australian Men's Open team, being part of the 2004 World Cup victory. It has been fantastic to watch him and the other young players develop into top elite athletes in the sport of Touch.*

*The tour was a nine-day mixture of games and sight-seeing, with the Australians having a great opportunity to sample the cultural differences between Australia and Japan, especially when we all had a home stay in Sendai.*

*Australia won all its games giving the English a lesson they deserved. The rivalry between Australia and Great Britain was certainly evident in these games. Australia played well against Japan. As a fledgling nation, Japan rose to the occasion and played well despite their lack of experience.*

*After the three Nations Cup won by Australia the Australia toured north to Sendai, and the English team South to Nagoya.*

*We all got back together in Kumagaya Tokyo prior to departure for either sight-seeing or going to our respective homes. The Australians toured down to Hiroshima staying in a traditional Japanese Inn and had a very moving experience at the Hiroshima peace memorial. It was uncanny as many of us had been on the Arizona in Pearl Harbour during sight-seeing after the 1995 World Cup and were physically moved by the impact that bombing on Pearl Harbour had and the same people were moved to rears in the Peace Memorial at Hiroshima.*

*After a fantastic tour the Aussies returned home enriched by the experience and very thrilled to be part of the growing development the sport is experiencing world wide.*

*The team Captain was Greg Ross from Queensland and he proved to be a very worthy recipient of the captaincy of an Australian Team. All members were excellent ambassadors for the Australian nation and proved to be excellent tourists. Mention should be made of the work done by the touring referee Rick Borg who undertook a difficult job by working with the Japanese and English referee throughout the event. Not only did he undertake this daunting task he spent his whole time with the players on tour.*





**Tri Nation's Cup: Australian Mixed Team:**

*Back: Lee Thompson (Coach), Jason Hunt, Gavin Shuker, Matthew Curran, Greg Ross, Michael Hunter, David Clark, Gerard McShane, Tim Villalba, Kathy O'Brien (Manager). Front: Gabrielle Maher, Jenny Williams, Rebecca Chesterton, Leanne Gray, Giselle Tirado, Angela Barr.*

*This developed into a special friendship except when Rick sang at a karaoke bar in Hiroshima 'ouch'. As every one knows Rick has gone onto to become the best referee in the world, and deservedly so remaining number one until he retired in 2007.*



*Making the ball do all the work! Matthew Curran passes to Jason Hunt in a match against Great Britain.*

### 1995 Japanese Tour Results

#### Mixed Division

Australia 17	Great Britain 0
Japan 3	Great Britain 1
Australia 17	Japan 0
Australia 15	Great Britain 0
Japan 8	Great Britain 5
Australia 17	Japan 1
Australia 18	Japan 0

***The 14th Annual  
Australian National  
Touch Championships  
Queensland Reins in New South  
Wales at Owen Park, Southport,  
Queensland from 15-19 October.***



There was a changing of the guard with a shift in power north of the border. Queensland walked away with the coveted Champion State National Title, overthrowing defending champions and arch rivals, New South Wales. Once again the tournament highlighted the tremendous development occurring in some of the smaller Touch states and territories.

'It's great to see the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and the Defence sending such competitive teams. They're all going to be a real threat in the near future. South Australian, Tasmanian, Victorian and Western Australia all put in good performances and were a credit to their respective states.'

Both New South Wales and Queensland dominated the women's competition during the preliminary rounds and the final was expected to be a very even contest. The game began at a furious pace with Queensland scoring early. The two states matched one another score for score until late in the game with Queensland holding a fragile 3-2 lead.

Every time New South Wales scored, it seemed that Queensland would immediately strike back. With just minutes remaining New South Wales was rescued by a brilliant individual touchdown from team captain, Katrina Maher, and the game moved into extra time.

After another nine minutes of thrilling play New South Wales's Jody English finally scored giving New South Wales the lead for the first time and victory. Queensland's Tanya Sewter won the Player of the Final Award.

A crowd of over 3000 came to see the well-credentialed clash between the New South Wales and Queensland men. There has been very little separating these two teams in recent years and this has made for some dramatic finishes, and this game was to be more of the same.

Despite New South Wales' recent dominance in this division, Queensland moved into the final as slight favourites after better form during the week. They also beat New South Wales 2-1, three days prior to the final.

Queensland took an early lead after a clever touchdown to young dynamo, Neil Ward.

Darren Shelley leveled for New South Wales soon after and the teams went to the half locked at 1-all. With no second half score the game finished at 1-all and so the teams assumed the now familiar drop-off role.

The game ended with a Queensland overlap and a dramatic Bob Brindell touchdown. Queensland won the game 2-1 ending New South Wales' three-year rein on the title. Queensland was certainly the better side and thoroughly deserved their win and their exuberant celebration showed just what this game meant to them.

Queensland rookie, Neil Ward, was also voted Player of the Final.



*Western Australia Men's Open in action*

**1995 National Championship  
Final Results**

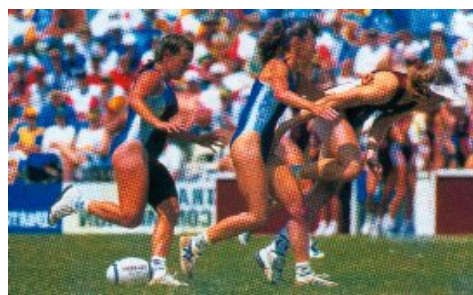
<b>Men</b>			
Queensland	3	NSW	1
<b>Women</b>			
NSW	4	Queensland	0
<b>Mixed</b>			
NSW	4	Queensland	1
<b>Men's 30</b>			
Queensland	5	NSW	2
<b>Women's 30s</b>			
NSW	5	Queensland	4
<b>Men's 35's</b>			
Queensland	3	NSW	2
<b>Men's 40</b>			
Queensland	4	NSW	1
<b>Men's 20</b>			
NSW	3	NSW	2
<b>Women's 20</b>			
Queensland	1	NSW	0



***At Last Touch Finally  
Comes to Television***

December 2nd will long be remembered as a milestone in the history of Australian Touch.

New South Wales played Queensland in the first ever State of a Origin Series, a series designed specifically for television broadcast. The series was an overwhelming success. If the largest crowd in the history of the game was not enough, the series was also screened to an estimated viewing audience of 6.5 million, generating more exposure for the sport than was seen collectively over the last ten years. The series took the game out of the park and into the living rooms of all Australians and placed Touch on the map once and for all. For a game that has struggled to gain media acceptance for so long, this event is seen as a huge break through for the sport.



*'Get out of the way!' - as NSW steams up field: Paula Vassello and Kit Maher (NSW) and Kath Bour (Queensland).*

'Look you just can't underestimate the significance of this event,' said Bill Ker, Chief Executive Officer of the ATA. 'We've been waiting for this for over ten years. It's a huge step forward. I think it's the most significant event in the history of our game, the first time we've ever received television coverage of this proportion and I couldn't be more delighted.'

'This is undoubtedly the best thing to ever happen to us,' agreed Ken Crawford, former General Manager of the NSWTA. 'The repercussions for our game are overwhelming to say the least. While our sport enjoys a huge following we've really struggled to gain any serious recognition. We've now got an opportunity to showcase the very best of our sport to the Australian public and give thousands of kids something to strive for.'

Touch Australia, the newly formed marketing arm of the Australian Touch Association, was the brains behind the project. In an effort to lift the profile of the sport, Touch Australia decided to break from tradition and incorporate a number of innovative changes. The simple philosophy was to take the very best from the game and mould it into a saleable TV product. They

wanted to create a more marketable environment, one more complimentary to the elite players, to spectators and television. The answer was an interstate clash between the men and women of New South Wales and Queensland, and so the State of Origin concept was born.



*Craig Pierce puts on the big step to avoid Jim Marinos (14) and George Ornellas.*

The series was played during the 1995 NSW State Cup, which was held in Port Macquarie from December 1-3. On day two of the tournament, Saturday the 2nd, the State Cup was temporarily suspended from 12 to 3 pm allowing participants an opportunity to watch the game. New South Wales and Queensland competed in four half hour games, two each for the men's and women's and from the series came four-half hour television specials.

The Origin really was pioneering stuff and went right against conservative tradition. In some ways the move was forced upon the administration by the sheer competitive nature of sports in the nineties. Touch had a choice to either sit back and watch other sports prosper or to take counteractive action. The rise of pay TV, for example presented new opportunities, and Touch decided to seize the chance.

#### **A Special Set of Rules for a Special Event**

A number of changes were made in an effort to create a more attractive spectacle. To promote a faster, higher scoring game, teams competed in a six-a-side format.

The extra room certainly opened the game up and encouraged a more free flowing game with 23 touchdowns scored on the day. Negative defensive techniques were also eliminated by the new 'Mexican stand off' rule, which forces defending teams to move off their line. New television friendly uniforms were also designed. Each game was reduced to two 15-minute halves.

The series was further enhanced by a superb 4000-seat arena and a state-of-the-art TV production team.

#### **Fireworks, Music and Balloons**

The games were preceded by an entertainment that included everything from a Mexican wave, to a helicopter landing, dancing girls, smoke flares, fireworks, music and balloons. In fact, it had all the paraphernalia of a Rugby League grand final.

The large 6000 crowd generated a very lively atmosphere the likes of which Touch had never seen before and the teams responded with four highly entertaining games NSW won both of the women's games while Queensland won both the men's and the overall title due to a higher scoring average.

While closer games would have made for a better script no one could argue with the quality of play. At the end of the day it was not so much the individual results that mattered, but more so what the results meant for the sport as a whole.

'This was a very historic event in more ways than one,' said Bill Ker. 'It was the first time we had ever designed a tournament specifically for spectators. We proved that given the right environment Touch can be a very entertaining spectator game.'

#### **A Television Spectacular**

The prerecorded series was sold to both free to air and Pay TV interests.

The mere fact so many carriers considered Touch as a viable product was quite remarkable considering the sport had no broadcast record and the networks were not exactly renowned for adventurous risks. It was seen as a huge coup for the game, especially when so many higher profile sports were over looked in Touch's favour.

The series has been taken by WIN, NBN, Sky Channel and new Pay TV carrier, Optus Vision. Each of the networks have also agreed to market the sport through television promotional campaigns. WIN ran the series in January 1996 through Queensland, NSW, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania during the one-day international cricket lunch breaks. Sky Channel also put the game into over 500 pubs and clubs around Australia.

The series also had forward strong overseas sales potential and detailed discussions to this end took place. Having a television personality toss the coin and interview the captains prior to kickoff was certainly a first for the game. It is a fact of life that sports often have to make minor concessions for television demands. Some spectators for example, wondered why the origin games were only 30-minutes long and why all four games were played back to back. The simple answer, without getting too complicated, was to cater to television requirements.

An origin is nothing without the players and their importance to the whole exercise cannot go unrecognised. 'Look, I've been around this sport for a number of years now,' said NSW Men's Captain, Mark Boland. 'And I've seen it go from a small backyard game to an international success.'

This is easily the biggest step we've ever taken. The whole concept is just great for the sport. It's about time the sport received some media support. Touch at this level is a fast, exciting game with so much to offer.'

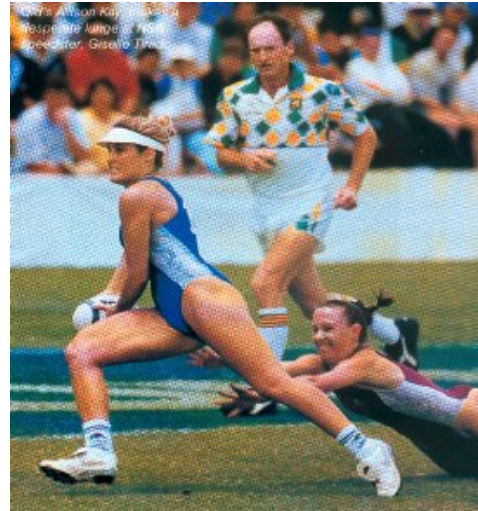
The Origin proved once and for all that if you provide a quality arena and a quality game then the people will come. And come they did! In fact over 6000 came, an all time record for the sport. 'We actually had to turn people away,' Crawford explained. 'Who would've ever believed that Touch would be turning spectators away! It's a problem we've only dreamt about.'



*Jim Marinos (ball) with Greg English in support, and Shane Rigby in defense.*

Like the players, the television production team was also treading in new waters. 'Our chief objective was to produce an entertaining product that would do the sport justice,' explained producer, Richard Scotts. 'We wanted to take the viewers right into the game so they could get a

feeling for the speed and intensity. I think we achieved this through camera placement and through radio microphones.'



*Queensland's Allison Kay makes a desperate lunge at New South Wales speedster, Giselle Tirado.*

In a technical first, each of the two captains and the three referees were fitted with tiny microphones. The microphones allowed the viewer to hear everything out in the middle, and proved very successful. The games were also covered by seven cameras.

Due to the speed of the game, a 'buggycam' (a camera mounted on a golf cart) was also devised and used to follow the players up and down the field. A first class commentary team was also assembled. Wide World of Sports highly respected commentator, Andrew Voss, and Optus Vision's, Russell Fairfax, were recruited to make the sport's very first broadcast call. All who viewed the event agreed that they both did a fantastic job.

In a sense, Touch was trying to create a modified or enhanced version of the game, much in the same way that one day cricket evolved from the five day game. 'Yes we're trying to move away from the local park mentality and create a spectacle for the elite players separate from the rest of the sport,' said Crawford. 'We're trying to focus on our strengths and marketing them for the good of the whole sport.'

Apart from the actual broadcast, the series itself generated unprecedented media interest in the sport and attracted national television,



*The Victorious Maroons: Back: Ian Rogers (Manager), Trent McDonald, Brenton O'Shannesy, Corey Foster, Craig Madders, Neil Ward, Craig Pierce, Peter McNeven (Coach), Swain Rovelli, Scott Notley. Front: Patrick Grehan, Dave Raper, Laurie Brindell, Shane Rigby, Bob Brindell, Greg Ross.*

newspaper, radio and magazine coverage. It was hoped that television coverage would open up exciting new opportunities.

### 1995 State of Origin Results

#### Mens

Queensland 5                      NSW 2

**MVP:** Craig Pierce (Qld)

Queensland 6                      NSW 3

**MVP:** Neil Ward (Qld)

#### Womens

NSW 3                      Queensland 1

**MVP:** Janine Cleary (NSW)

NSW 3                      Queensland 0

**MVP:** Giselle Tirado (NSW)

### 1995 All-stars of Touch

Robert Brindell (Qld), Kevin Feldman (Qld), Tony Howard (NSW), Leesa Johnston (Qld), Katrina Maher (NSW), Marc Scott (NSW), Stacey Gregory (NSW), Steve Tomlin (Tas), Scott Lewis (NT), Louise Mumford (WA), Tanya Mitchell (WA), Kelby Pickering (SA), Trent McDonald (Qld), Natalie Wilkinson (Qld)

**Coach of the Year:** Keith Harris-Walker (WA)

**Manager of the Year:** Ken Crawford (NSW)

**Referee of the Year:** Rick Borg (Qld)

**Official of the Year:** Ian Stanley (NSW) (TIP Director)