

# One game, two trophies and a rising star

By Andrew Scotting



On 12 November 2011, the NSW Bar Hockey team travelled to Hawthorn in Melbourne to defend the Rupert Balfe – Leycester Meares Cup that they had held since a stunning albeit unexpected victory in Sydney two years earlier. The Victorian Bar turned up in numbers intent on restoring their supremacy in the fixture that has been a regular one since its resurgence in 2000.

In the 2000 fixture, the NSW Bar fielded a wealth of legal experience, including Ireland QC, Bellanto QC, Justice Katzmann and Callaghan SC; a team later labeled by our opponents as ‘too old, too fat and too slow for hockey’. Both teams this year elected for more youth. The average age of the NSW team was lowered significantly by the addition of Tim and Miriam Pritchard. Mim was taken out in the warm up by a pass from her younger brother, and sidelined with a nasty bruise under her left eye. Some expert attention from her Mum, Laura, was required and we started the match with Mim ‘on ice’

and unexpected to take the field.

The first half started with NSW taking the ball and launching a brief attack that rebounded in a counter attack from the Victorians, resulting in a penalty corner. The Victorians opened the scoring from the penalty corner with an expertly executed drag flick. There was an audible sigh from a number of our team who had previously been the victims of superior Victorian firepower.

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The team responded well to launch a number of promising attacks in the remainder of the first half. The Victorian goalkeeper made a number of handy saves to keep us scoreless, but there were periods in which we dominated in attack, particularly being awarded a number of penalty corners. Our defence was also resolute and a

one-nil scoreline at half time was respectable. The heat thankfully slowed the pace of the game somewhat; both teams seeking out the shade for the half time talk.

NSW performed well again in the early part of the second half. After initially holding the Victorians at bay, we pushed forward. After about 10 minutes the scores were leveled, after a series of slick passes in the circle, finished at close range by one of our veteran ring-ins.

NSW then came into a period of dominance thanks to our ‘best on ground’ 12 year old, Mim Pritchard, who had managed to get a medical clearance from Laura around the half time interval. In a classic piece of right wing play, Mim trapped the pass, eliminated the fullback and drew the goalkeeper, before passing the ball across the face of goal to be slammed home by Gary Hill on the post. A few minutes later, the next goal was almost a carbon copy with Mim receiving the ball on top of

the circle after a fast break from the back and she calmly trapped it and slotted it home.

The Victorian spirit was broken. NSW continued to push forward and finished full of running. A late consolation goal to the Victorians came from a penalty corner, to



make the final scoreline 3–2 to NSW.

The game was followed by the presentation of the cup by the umpires and some causal rehydration, a catch-up and some consolation of our Victorian comrades. That night the fixture was celebrated at a dinner for both teams. A surprise guest of the NSW team was the ‘Enforcer’, Angus Ridley, formerly of 8 Wentworth and of NSW Bar Hockey and Gordon Eagles fame. Gus, now a wine maker at Coldstream Hills, brought with him a single vineyard

Chardonnay and a trophy winning Pinot Noir, as a peace offering for his absence on the field. Both wines were delicate and refined, in stark contrast to Gus’ abilities on the field, which could only be described as woody and robust, with a bitter after taste on the back palate of most of his opponents.

A great night was had by all and there was much discussion of the return fixture, and of game plans to beat the solicitors.

The NSW barristers and family members in the team

were Pritchard SC, Larkin SC, McManamey, Scotting, Neild, Hill, Mim and Tim Pritchard and our long term affiliate Ganasan Narianasamy. Thanks to our veteran ring-ins, Mohan, Alex, Andy, Greg, Theo and the Fish, and to the umpires Tony and Tony. A special thanks to Stuart Wood of the Victorian Bar, who has assumed the capataincy of the Victorians and made the arrangements for the game and the dinner.

