



The History of Australian Schools Football

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with updates from Richard Beazley, Chris Conti and Greg Best

In the beginning

School Sport Australia Football, formerly Australian Schools Soccer and formerly the Australian Secondary Schools Soccer Association (formerly Federation) grew out of the interstate series between NSW and SA from 1968-74. Bob Quimby, the NSW coach over this period, who conducted games against New Zealand Schools and representative teams from the USA, organised the initial meeting of the Association.

Also in attendance were Frank Deegan (Chair), Denis Adrigan (Australian Coaches' Federation), Bill Vrolyks (NSW Coaches' Federation) and Jack Dodd (NSW Combined High Schools Convenor). During 1973 Bob Quimby actively promoted the idea amongst the State government school organisations and, in a meeting of state soccer conveners, the support for Bob's plans to involve all schools was accepted.

The first interstate Under 18 championships were conducted in 1975 but it was not until 1980 that all states participated (the present Under 20 age structure allows the competition open to almost all Australian secondary school students). Victoria won the first championship in 1975.

In 1975 the Association also conducted the first National Cup Australia-wide schools competition. In its first year the cup was sponsored by Toyota and won by Footscray Technical School(Vic) then in 1976 by Bankstown Boys High(NSW) as the Coca Cola Cup.

International football began in 1974 when the Association organised a series of matches with the U15 English Schools F.A. that visited Australia. The Association's first overseas tour was to Canada and the USA in August 1978, organised by Bob Quimby, Jack Dodd and Bill Turner. This team contained many players that established themselves as Socceroos and NSL stars: Yankos, Raskopoulos, Katholos, Krncevic and Pezzano. In 1979 the Select squad played the curtain raiser against the NSW Youth team before the Australia v New York Cosmos match with Pele at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Tours commence again

International tours recommenced in 1985 when Chris James (NSW) and Chapman Bonner (Qld) took the boys' squad to the United Kingdom for historic games against England (0-1) and Scotland (2-1). The New Zealand tour followed in 1986 culminating with a 1-0 win over the Kiwis at Mount Smart Stadium.

The girls' first appearance at the National Championships was in Canberra in 1985 when NSW played a series against the ACT, followed by Sydney in 1986 where NSW, ACT and

Queensland along with select schools from Sydney played alongside the boys. The inaugural titles for girls in 1987 was won by NSW in Perth, allowing NSW to take out their first “double” of their thirteen to date; Queensland the only other state to do this in 1992.

In 1987 the boys toured Hong Kong and China after the titles in Perth. The boys then toured the USA, United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland in 1988/89, playing internationals against England (3-1), Wales (0-1), Northern Ireland (1-1) and the Republic of Ireland (1-0). This tour showcased the emerging talents of Vidmar, Seal, Talladira, Corica and Maloney among many.

Other boys’ and girls’ tours have been conducted to USA and England (1989/90), South East Asia (Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei) (1990/91), United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (1991/92) – on this tour Cheryl Salisbury completed 4 years of selection in the Australian Schoolgirls - New Zealand (1992/93) and Hong Kong/China/Taipei (1993/94).

The last decade

Following the 1994 nationals in Sydney the boys toured Argentina, Chile and Uruguay whilst the girls hosted a three-test series against New Zealand, diplomatically ending with shared results. The 1995 undefeated boys’ squad travelled to South East Asia for internationals and games against the burgeoning M-League and S-League professionals while the girls, with Joanne Peters making her international debut, returned to New Zealand and made a clean-sweep of all internationals and tour games. 1996 saw the first boys’ home internationals since 1974 with victory against the Malaysians as part of their Youth World Cup preparations, this being a curtain raiser to a National League fixture.

Further internationals in 1996 in Sydney saw games against the New Zealand schoolboys in a two-test series. Both 1996 (Geelong) boys’ and girls’ select squads travelled to Europe in December of 1996, which saw both teams playing four European internationals with Mark Bresciano emerging as player of the tour, along with current Matildas Melissa Barbieri and Danielle Small. In 1997 the boys’ team, selected during the Adelaide titles, toured New Zealand, winning the two-test series, and a return to South America while the girls also toured New Zealand before continuing on to the USA, Heather Garriock emerging on that tour as a player of the future.

Both the boys’ and girls’ teams toured New Zealand in January 1999. The girls’ team played their Kiwi counterparts and a young Lisa De Vanna made her mark, while the boys played the New Zealand U/23 side as well as Auckland U/19s. The boys’ team, which was captained by Patrick Kisnorbo, continued onto Fiji to play their U/17 team, which resulted in two wins to the Australians.

1999 saw the introduction of the “A” team concept that is designed to allow more players an opportunity to undertake overseas tours and represent Australia. The inaugural “A” team played New Zealand in Brisbane in September 1999 and undertook a tour of Fiji in January 2000.

The full boys’ and girls’ teams toured the United Kingdom and Ireland in December 2000 with the boys returning undefeated in all their international fixtures and only losing one match on tour. Standout was a 4-3 win over Ireland in Dublin after trailing 1-2 until the 88th minute!

2000/2001 was one of Australian Schools Soccer’s busiest periods. The Boys “A” team undertook a tour of New Caledonia and Vanuatu in November/December 2000 and at the same time the Girls team toured New Zealand and Tahiti.

January 2001 saw the inaugural "Australian Schools International Cup" staged at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra where New Zealand, Northern Ireland and Wales competed alongside the host nation. This is the first time that we have hosted a full international tournament that resulted in a win by Australia over New Zealand 2-1 in the final and remaining undefeated in the series.

In 2002 and 2003 the Schoolgirls played series against New Zealand in Canberra, with Australia taking a clean sweep 4-1, 4-1, 3-0 and 7-0, with Sally Shipard starring. In 2004 the girls toured New Zealand with the scores being 0-0, 4-1 and 3-2. In 2004 the boys also toured New Zealand and played two Internationals, winning both by 1-0 and 7-1.

In 2005 the Schoolboys hosted New Zealand in Sydney winning two Internationals 3-0 and 1-0. Later in January 2006 both the Schoolboys and Schoolgirls embarked on their most ambitious tour to the UK and Ireland playing International and club games. Results of the Internationals were: Boys: 0-2 v Welsh Colleges; 1-2 v Northern Ireland; 2-2 v England; 1-0 v England Colleges; 2-0 v Scotland; 1-0 v Republic of Ireland. Girls: 3-0 v Northern Ireland; 0-3 v Republic of Ireland; 0-0 v Scotland.

In January 2007 the boys toured New Zealand (winning the Trans Tasman trophy) and the South Pacific with further internationals against Samoa, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands U/20's while the girls hosted New Zealand at home over three internationals in Brisbane with a 2-1 series win.

January 2008 saw the return to the United Kingdom for both the boys and girls squads but not before a narrow series win for the girls over New Zealand in two games in Sydney. Victory over British Colleges 2-0, and Northern Ireland 2-0 and a 0-0 draw against Wales were highlights for the girls, while the boys' tough schedule included 3-1 v Wales, 1-1 v Republic of Ireland and 3-2 v British Colleges.

Both boys' and girls' teams embarked on their first tour to Japan and Korea in November/December of 2008. The venture into Asian Football is timely, as Australia's national and club teams are all now aligned to the AFC competitions. The boys played some of the top J-league and K-league youth sides: Japan's Sanfrece FC (0-1) and Korea's Chunnam FC (1-6) and Ulsan FC (1-1). They also drew 0-0 with the national champion Japanese High School team Minami HS. The girls similarly played a range of regional, club and school sides, defeating the Hiroshima Prefecture regional team (2-0) and drawing with the strong Ulsan Hyundai Technology High School team (3-3).

The boys' full International results have been exceptional, the vast majority being away from home. Some highlights of games over the years include these memorable victories: 2-1 v Scotland (1986); 1-0 v New Zealand (1986) 1-0 v Uruguay (1995); 1-0 v China (1987); 1-0 v Malaysia U19s (1996) 2-1 v Hong Kong (1987); 3-1 v Singapore (1996); 1-0 v Rep. of Ireland (1989); 1-0 v South-East England (1996); 3-1 v England (1989); 5-1 v Wales (1996); 4-0 v Malaysia (1991); 3-1 v New Zealand (1997); 2-0 v Singapore Olympic team (1991); 2-0 v New Zealand (1999 A); 4-1 v Brunei senior team (1991); 4-3 v Ireland (1999); 2-0 v Wales (1992); 10- 2 v New Caledonia 17s (2000 A); 1-0 v Northern Ireland (1992); 3-2 v Vanuatu 20s (2000 A); 3-0 v New Zealand (1992); 8-0 v Northern Ireland (2001); 2-1 v Hong Kong (1994); 4-1 v New Zealand (2001); 2-1 v Ecuador (1995); 8-0 v New Zealand (2004), 1-0 v Republic of Ireland, 2-0 v Scotland (2006) & a boys/girls double over the British Colleges in 2008.

Similarly the girls have performed excellently on the international stage. Since 1994 the girls have regularly played series against New Zealand for the "Deane Low Shield", with Australia never yet having to hand the trophy over. Apart from this record of 21 wins and 4

draws in 29 games over New Zealand some other memorable results have been 2-1 v Wales (1996); 4-1 v Welsh Colleges (1999); 3-0 v Wales (1999); 3-2 v Irish Combined Colleges (1999); 3-2 v England FA Academy (1999); 6-0 v Tahiti senior national team (2000); 6-0 and 3-1 v Tahiti U20 (2000); 3-0 v Northern Ireland (2005); 0-0 v Scotland (2005); and the famous 2-0 victory over British Colleges in January 2008.

The 2009 boys' and girls' teams will tour the UK and Ireland in January of 2010, playing a series of internationals against England, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as club games.