

# The History of Australian Schools Football

## In the beginning

Australia Schools Football, formerly Australian Schools Soccer and formerly the Australian Secondary Schools Soccer Association (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 19 Years & Under age structure allows the competition to be 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 under 15 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: Charlie Yankos, Peter Raskopoulos, Peter Katholos, Eddie Krncevic and Tony Pezzano.

In 1979 the selected 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 24 to date; with 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 Tony Vidmar, David Seal, Carlo Talladira, Steve Corica and Brad 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 “Modern Era”**

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 international and tour games.

The 1996 team 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 win. Both 1996 (Geelong) boys and girls selected 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 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 under 23 side as well as Auckland under 19s. The boys team, which was captained by Patrick Kisorbo, continued onto Fiji to play their under 17 team which resulted in two wins to the Australians.

In 1999 the introduction of the “A” team concept 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. The standout was a 4-3 win over Ireland in Dublin after trailing 1-2 until the 88th minute! During 2000-2001 this 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 was the first time that NSW 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 a 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. International results were: Boys: 0-2 v Welsh Colleges; 1-2 v Nth Ireland; 2-2 v England; 1-0 v England Colleges; 2-0 v Scotland; 1-0 v Rep. Ireland. Girls: 3-0 v Nth Ireland; 0-3 v Rep. 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 under 20's, while the girls hosted NZ at home over 3 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.

## **Asia Awaits**

Both boys' and girls' teams embarked on their first tour to Japan and South 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 Sanfrecce 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 2009 boys and girls teams toured China, 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. Highlight for the boys was an emphatic 4-0 victory over England Independent Schools, with the game being refereed by World Cup final referee Howard Webb. An exciting 1-1 draw with Northern Ireland, a pulsating 4-4 draw with Swansea City and a hard fought 1-1 draw with Walsall were other notable results.

The girls similarly played well, with Welsh Colleges 5-2, Ireland Schoolgirls 3-0 and Scotland U18 3-0 being their highlights.

In January 2011 both teams again ventured into Asia, this time to China and Japan. The boys highlights were a 3-match series against Beijing Guoan, winning 2-1, and matches against the Japanese National Champions Minami HS and leading J-league clubs Sanfrecce Hiroshima and Tokyo Verdy. The girls played a series against the Beijing Academy before taking on Hiroshima National Champions Hinamoto and finishing with an exciting final minute equaliser against Jumanji High School.

## **Recently**

The 2011 squads toured The UK and Ireland in January 2012 for international fixtures in England, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland, as well as club fixtures. In what was both unexpected and unprecedented, both teams were undefeated on the tour.

For the boys, 6 wins from 8 games included victory over Wales, Republic of Ireland and British Colleges, as well as hard fought draws with England Schoolboys and Northern Ireland. The girls record of 8 wins from 8 games speaks for itself, where victory over Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland and British Colleges were highlights. Never before have the two Australian teams been so successful on this arduous European tour.

2013 saw the School Sport Australia teams undertake the most difficult of tasks in world football, playing teams in Brazil and Argentina. This ground breaking tour included games against the icons of world football such as Boca Juniors, Botafoga & Newells Old Boys, a journey no Australian teams at any level have made before.

The 2015 squads returned for an extensive tour of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which included five full international fixtures (England, Scotland, Wales, Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland) which saw the boys team finish this punishing schedule undefeated in all full international fixtures, culminating in the 2-0 win over England.

In 2017, the U/18 Australian Schoolboys toured the UK & Ireland along with the U/18 Australian Schoolgirls. The Schoolboys won their fair share of games, including the 4-1 win against the England Independent Schools side. The Schoolgirls team went through the entire tour undefeated, a fantastic achievement with a young side. The following year in Jan 2018, the U/18 Schoolboys toured England and Wales playing a total of 10 games (in a gruelling schedule). The stand-out game in 2018 tour was the 1-0 victory vs a very talented Bolton Wanderers Academy.

In Apr 2018, the very first U/16 Australian Schoolboys tour took place, this time to Japan. In Jan 2019, a newly selected U/16 Australian Schoolboys squad accompanied the U/18 Aussie Schoolboys to the UK & Ireland, where they played International games as well as playing games against Pro-Club sides. The 3-2 win against the QPR Academy was the U/16's highlight.

In 2020, our U/16 and U/18 Schoolboys again toured the UK and Ireland. The highlight of the 2020 Schoolboys tour was the double header victories over Scotland in Glasgow, the U/16's won 3-2 and our U/18's won 1-0 against very strong opposition.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic spreading around the world, there were no overseas tours organised in 2021 and 2022. There were no Schoolgirls tours organised for the same reason.

Tours recommenced in 2023. The U/18 Schoolgirls finished Runners-Up in the prestigious US/Dallas Cup Tournament. The U/16's and U/18's Schoolboys Tour of the UK & Ireland was again a big success, highlights being the 18's 2-1 win over Scotland Schoolboys and the 16's 5-1 win against a strong Arsenal U/16 side, as well as the 2-0 win over Celtic 16's.

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