

2001

A new era as Scorpions Men's dominance comes to an end.

*After 29 undefeated games
spanning four years of NTL
competition, the Scorpions'
Men's team finally surrender
their title.*

In the opening game of 2001, the Scorpions' Men played the North Queensland Tropical Cyclones. Led by superstar Gavin Shuker, the Cyclones were the first team to inflict a defeat on the invincible Scorpions, narrowly beating them 4-3. Spectators were shocked and the players knew they would need a miracle to defend their title again.

The miracle dissipated when the Gold Coast Sharks made it two defeats in five years, winning their round game 4-1 and putting the Scorpions out of the finals. In Group B, the star-studded Brisbane Cobras were too good in the opening game against Sydney Mets and went through their preliminaries undefeated.

The Mets only loss was to the Cobras which secured them a semis spot to keep a NSW team in the hunt for the title. Without the Scorpions it was anybody's championship. The Brisbane Cobras shot to favouritism when they disposed of the Cyclones 4-2 in their semi. The best players for the Cyclones were Gavin Shuker, Phillip Gyemore and Tim Villalba.

In the other semi, the Sydney Mets won a hard fought victory over the Gold Coast Sharks 3-2. The best for the Sharks were Corey Foster, Craig Searston, Ben Robertson, Ricky Best and Ryan Pollack.

The final was a torrid affair and resembled a State of Origin match. Unfortunately the Sydney team were no match for the Cobras who went on

to record a 6-2 win. The best for Cobras were Brent Madders (Player of the Final), Brenton O'Shanesy, Trent McDonald, Jarrod Tump, Craig Madders and Shane Duell.



Gavin Shuker playing for his beloved NQ Tropical Cyclones.

The vanquished were best served by Kurt Nowotny (Player of the Series), Tim Ashbolt, Daniel Walsh, Daniel Rushworth, Anthony Ziade and Scott Danswan.

Cobras Women want third consecutive Title

Like their Men's team, the Women's Cobras boast a large number of players who represent Australia at International Tests and World Cup events. Defending the title they won in 1999 and 2000, the Cobras went through their preliminary rounds undefeated, only being pushed by the Gold Coast Sharks who held them to a 0-all draw. The Sharks came in second on the ladder despite having three drawn games.

In Group B, the Sydney Mets signalled their intentions by also going through undefeated. Their closest game being 4-2 against the Rebels who came in second on the ladder. In the semis the Cobras disposed of the Rebels 3-1 with Selene Thornton, Karen Lawson, Erin Turner,

Dominique Maher and Player of the Series, Gabriel Maher, standing out.

The other semi saw the Sydney Mets scrape home against a hot Sharks outfit 2-1. Best on field for the Sharks were Theresa Anderson, Amy Fong, Justine Smith, Sharyn Williams and Rebecca Chesterton. The final was another Interstate clash and fought just as fiercely.

In a game where both sides treasured every inch of territory, the advantage see-sawed between one team and the other. In the end, the strength of the Sydney Mets prevailed and denied the Cobras their third title in a row. Best for the ex-champions were Tina Elliot, Rachel Reid, Alyson Kay, Catherine Bell and her sister Angela Barr, Shelly Matcham and Sharyn Martin.



Player of the final Louise Winchester

The Mets were best served by Player of the Final Louise Winchester, Belinda Murdoch, Renee Willmott, Amanda Judd, Trish McCarthy and Melinda McMaha.

Mixed Division dominance shared amongst three teams

In four years of competition three teams had shared the Mixed title. First it was the Sydney Rebels, then the Sydney Scorpions twice, then the Brisbane Cobras in 2000. The scene was set for a new side to join the elite group.

The Gold Coast Sharks arrived at Coffs Harbour with the strongest Mixed team ever assembled by them. They breezed through their first five games scoring a total of 33 touchdowns with only six against. They then came up against the Sydney Mets who put them to the test and went down narrowly 2-3 to the northern invaders.

The acid test came in the next game against title holders the Brisbane Cobras whose class shone through, with the champions disposing of the visitors 5-1. The semis saw the Sharks dispose of the Hunter Western Hornets 4-0 and the Brisbane Cobras demolish the Sydney Scorpions 8-0. The scene was set for the current title holder to show the new comers who were the real champions.

In an intense low scoring game the Cobras, led by Cameron Costello and Katie Curtis, (both named Player of the Series), Stephen Swan, Alita McPhee, Costello and Kate Barker set about showing the Sharks how to play finals Touch. They dominated possession and territory but could not draw away from their opponents.

The Sharks repelled each attack and led by Craig Slavin and Belinda Dawney, (both Players of the Finals), Zara Houston, Adam Falzon, Karley Banks and Mark Hartley, the underdog Sharks finally prevailed to win 2-1 and claim the title.

2001 NTL Final Results

Men's Open

Cobras 6 Mets 2

Women's Open

Mets 3 Cobras 2

Mixed Open

Sharks 2 Cobras 1

National Touch League 2001 Overall Placing

Teams	Men	Wm	Mx	#
Brisbane Cobras	15	12	9	36
Sydney Mets	12	15	6	33
Gold Coast Sharks	9	10	12	31
NQ Cyclones	10	6	2	18
Sydney Scorpions	7	2	7	16
Hunter Hornets	4	7	4	15
Sunwest Razorbacks	8	1	5	14
Sydney Rebels	3	9	-	12
Southern Suns	2	8	1	11
Northern Eagles	5	3	3	11
Crusaders	6	5	-	11
Barbarians	1	4	-	5

NTL for Seniors in its fourth year

2001 saw the Senior Touch players from all over the country gathered again at Coffs Harbour from 14 to 17 March to contest the Australian Senior Touch Titles.

Men 30 Semis Series

In the premier seniors division - the Men's 30 - the competition could not be tighter. Champions for the first two years and missing a place in the final last year South Queensland Sharks turned up with a 'gun' side and were favourites to take the title back. Placed in Pool A, they opened their account with a tight 3-1 win over the ACT but were over confident after a 10-1 decisive win over the ADF.



Tony Eltakchi on the run for the Scorpions.

They then came up against a committed Sydney Metropolitan team who narrowly defeated them 3-2. As it was the quarter final series, they made the play off and after winning their quarter 6-2 against the NQ Tropical Cyclones (Bill Searle being their best); they met another Sydney side

in the Scorpions who knocked them out of the race 5-4 in their semis clash. The best for the Sharks were Adrian Harrington and Corey Foster. Leading Pool A was the Sydney Mets who had an easy run into the finals by defeating Northern Eagles in the quarters 9-1 and Brisbane Cobras 5-2 in the semis. The best for Eagles was Steve Graham and for Cobras, Ashley Heiniger and Darren Pfeffer.

Pool B saw Scorpions and Cobras come one and two. Cobras got to the semis by winning their quarter against Southern Suns 6-2 with Dave Elliott the Suns' best. Then in the semis they went down to the Mets. The Scorpions had an easy 4-0 win against the Crusaders in the Quarter and as mentioned earlier, a tight semi against the Sharks saw them get to the final for the second year running.

The all Sydney final was a contest where no quarter was given. Both sides followed each other on the score board with the Scorpions finally defending their title and running out winners, 3-2. Best for the Mets were Jamie Black and Fenro Harb, while for the winners Tony Eltakchi (Player of the Series) was a stand out and he was ably supported by James Marks and Graham Beale (Player of the Final).

Men 35 Semis Series

Having won two out of three and coming runner up on the other occasion, the Crusaders were red hot favourites to retain their title won last year. Their main rival was the Sydney Scorpions who lost narrowly to them last time around. In a twist to the normal ranking of teams by tournament organisers, the Crusaders and Scorpions (last year's finalists) were seeded in the same Pool (B). They finished one and two after the preliminary rounds with the Crusaders taking heart from their victory over the Scorpions, 4-2.

In Pool A, the Mets finished undefeated with the Hornets second after going down to the leaders 2-3. However, as there was a quarter final series, the Hornets scored a semis berth defeating the Southern Suns 3-1, while surprisingly the Mets went down to the Sunwest Razorbacks 4-1.

The other quarters saw the Scorpions dispose of the Sharks 5-3 while the Crusaders had a comfortable 6-3 win over the Eagles. This brought the Scorpions up against the Razorbacks in the semis, while the Crusaders played the Hornets.

Despite strong games from Scott Notley, Peter Marsh and Niel Goetsch, the Razorbacks could not produce their quarter final form and went down to the Scorpions 2-4. Strong games from Dean McManus, Andy and Dave Proust and Barry Walsh appeared to get the Hornets over the line against the champions but in the final seconds the Crusaders came back and eventually won 4-3.

The final was a reply of last year's decider and it again lived up to its reputation of a fast and furious encounter. In a game that saw the lead change constantly, the Crusaders finally got home 4-3 to retain their title. The best for the runners up were Michael Sproule, Tim Kitchingham and the Cheung boys, David, Jeff and Michael. The Crusaders' best were John Samin (Player of the Series), Simon Minney (Player of the Final), Ray Kiley and Steve Hughes.



Tim Kitchingham, playing for the Scorpions, trying to evade a Touch.

Men 40 Semis Series

Like the Crusaders in the 35's, the Sydney Mets were out to show everyone who were the champion Over 40's team and brought to Coffs Harbour a strong team to defend their title. Like the 35's, the finalists from last year was seeded in the same pool and their round game resulted in a 5-all draw.

Like the Mets and Suns who went through their round games undefeated, the Sharks and Razorbacks did likewise in Pool B sharing the points after their 1-all draw. The quarters saw the Mets thrash the Eagles 12-3, the Razorbacks just get home 3-2 against the Cobras, the Sharks beat the Hornets easily 7-1 and the Suns dispose of the Scorpions 12-3.

After such a good quarter final win, the Suns fancied their chances of playing for the title again, only this time winning it. They came up against a committed Sharks side in the semis, who took them to the wire just losing 2-3. Best for the Sharks were Tim Burt, Phil Evans and Bob Young.

In the other semi the Mets ended the aspirations of the Razorbacks, winning 6-2. The best players for the losers were Don Baartz, Kevin Fleet, Murry McAuliffe and Bob Roberston. Again like the 35s, the final was a replay of the previous year and in a game that changed leaders on four occasions, the Mets stole the break and went on to record 6-5 victory thus retaining their title.



Victor Tagliferra player of the Series for the Mets

The Suns were best served by Bryan Brown (Player of the Final), Gary Newman, Dave Smithers and Mick McCall. For the Mets, Victor Tagliferra (Player of the Series), Joe Lancuba,

Emanuel 'Budgie' Behagiar, Bob Behnke and Phil Lindsay all stood out.

Men 45 Semis Series

The Mens 45s consisted of a nine team competition where all teams played each other and only the top two played the finals. The Eagles, who had made all three past finals (winning the inaugural title), were again a contender to make it four in a row.

They took a mighty blow during the round games, suffering a 1-6 loss to the Razorbacks and scraping home 2-0 against the Brisbane Cobras, never the less finishing second on the competition table and meeting their destiny in the final. The Hunter Hornets and Sydney Mets were also contenders but in the end suffered two losses to put them into third and fourth spot.

The Hornets lost 2-7 to the Mets and 1-4 to the Eagles, while the Mets lost 10-4 to the Eagles and 1-3 to the Razorbacks. The best players for Mets were Dieter Major, Garry Gallen and Paul McGouran and Hornets were best served by Brian Hanson, Kim Miller and Vince Cronin.

The final between Razorbacks and Eagles was again a replay of the previous year, with the Eagles throwing everything into their performance only to come away as runners up losing 2-4. The best for the Eagles were Barry Draws (Player of the Series), David Mitchell, Peter Vincent, Ross Knox and Geoff Spargo, while for the victors Jock Pratten (Player of the Final), John Mason, Kevin Feldman, Colin Maddick and Ray Standish played superbly.

Men 50 Semis Series

Six teams again contested the second Men's 50 division with last year's finalist bound to provide the fireworks. The Sydney Mets started off their campaign to wrest the tile from the Sharks but faltered when defeated 3-4 by the Cobras and having their game against the Rebels forfeited.

The Sharks on the other hand felt they were in with a chance, losing only one preliminary game 2-3 to the Razorbacks, whose only loss was 3-5 to the Mets. The Rebels claimed third place on the table with the Cobras fifth, missing out on a touchdown difference against the Mets.

The semis saw the Mets struggle to claim a win over the Razorbacks 3-2 but the Sharks demolished the Rebels 6-3. The best for the

Rebels were Phil Billsborough, John Oakes, and Dan Coates while for the Razorbacks Bill Bray, Greg Wallace and Trevor Howard stood out.

Again a replay of the 2000 final, the Sharks simply dominated the Mets, running out comfortable winners 6-2. Player of the Series Maurice Stewart stood out for the Mets ably assisted by Kevin Farmer, Terry Reynolds and



Darrell Madge on the attack for the Sharks.

Michael Jonson.

Terry Hadfield (Player of the Final), Doug Robson, Darrell Madge, Bernie Lowther and Ray Forster starred for the Sharks who were overjoyed at retaining their title.

Women 30 Semis Series

A healthy eleven teams turned up to contest this year's title with no team having won it twice. The title holders, the Brisbane Cobras, were hopeful of being the first but finished third in their Pool and subsequently met the Suns (winners in 1999) in the quarter finals going down a miserable 0-8.

Other contenders, the Sydney Scorpions, finished top of Pool B and won well over the Sharks in their quarter final encounter, beating them 3-1.

Also in with a chance were the Hornets and Crusaders who came first and second in Pool A. The Hornets defeated the Eagles 5-1 in the quarters and fancied their chances but the Crusaders were well beaten in the quarters by the Razorbacks 6-1.

The semis produced some great Touch for these 30+ Women athletes. The Suns and Hornets game was a cracker with neither side showing superiority over the other and in the end it was sad to have a loser. The Suns however prevailed 3-2, with Kirsty Inglis, Gai Taylor, Dot Stockwell and Anne Drinkwater playing strong for the Hornets.

In the other semi, again both teams didn't give an inch with the lead changing several times. The Razorbacks just edged out the Scorpions 5-4. Best for the Scorpions were Tracey Elliott, Lisa Wilkes (Player of the Series), Tracey Simpson and Alicia O'Keefe.

A close semis series was mirrored in the finals where the Razorbacks just got on top of the Suns 1-0 to claim their second championship. Best for the Suns were Kylie Crossley, Veronica Price and Kaye Norris while for the winners; Kerry Strasser was Player of the Final and was well assisted by Jacque Morden, Leanne Sharman, Jo Verrenkamp and Julene Robertson.

Women 35 Semis Series

The Scorpions, winners of two of the three titles in this division, were out to avenge their semi final loss of last year and dominate this year's championship. Last year's finalists the Cobras and Eagles both fell to the Scorpions in the preliminary rounds 1-0 and 4-2 respectively. A 0-all draw against the Suns saw the Scorpions come first and the Suns second on the competition table.

The Scorpions met the Sharks in the semis who put up a great struggle to go down 0-2 despite the best efforts of Michelle Robertson, Julie Shaw, Kerry Norman and Charley Beitzel. In the other semis the Suns had a hard encounter against a committed Cobras side just winning against them 2-1. Best for the Cobras were Angie McPheen, Chris Poppi, Leanne Hudson and Michelle Schafer.

The final saw the Scorpions and Suns battle out a tough game with the Scorpions wearing down their opponents to record a 2-0 victory.

Starring for the Suns were Allyson Fisher, Jill McGuinness, Denise Clune and Jennifer Clancy while for the winners Donna Clapham was Player of the Series, Michelle Smidt was Player of the Finals and they were ably assisted by Jann Rose, Gabrielle Whelan and Judy Malcolm.

2001 NTL Final Senior Results

Men's 30

Scorpions 3 Mets 2

Women's 30

Razorbacks 1 Suns 0

Men's 35

Crusaders 4 Scorpions 3

Women's 35

Scorpions 2 Suns 0

Men's 40

Mets 6 Suns 5

Men's 45

Razorbacks 4 Eagles 2

Men's 50

Sharks 6 Mets 2

Youth Titles enter their fifth year

From the 12th to the 13th March, the Men's and Women's under 20's enjoyed their chance to shine in front of their heroes.

Boys 20's

Like many other divisions, the experiment of having last year's finalist in the same group proved that the cream always rises to the top and in this case the Sharks and Mets finished one and two in Pool A, not allowing any other team in that pool a chance of making the semis.

Besides losing 2-3 to the Sharks, the Mets had a close call against the NQ Tropical Cyclones drawing 2-all to a team that finished last in this division. The Sharks had a close call 2-all against the Northern Eagles.

The Scorpions and Razorbacks finished one and two respectively in Pool B but the latter were no match for the Sharks in the semis going down 1-5. The best players for the Razorbacks were Ben Roberts, Matthew Roberts and Daniel Feldman.



The Mets boys not enjoying their final.

The other semi featured the two Sydney teams, the Mets and Scorpions. Neither gave an inch in the game but the Mets prevailed 2-1 over their rivals. The best for the Scorpions were Mark Thompson, Matthew Takchi, Troy Malcolm and Steven Takchi.

Again the final was a replay of last year with the Mets expecting to take the title off the Sharks, but it was a 'no brainer' as the Sharks stormed home 8-2. The best for the Mets were Adam Springfield, Dan Munro, Paul Dwyer and Marc Walsh.

Best on field for the Sharks were Jeb Hipperson, Player of the Series and Player of the Final Brad Davids. They were assisted by strong games

from Drumayne Dayberg-Muir, Mark Regazzoli and James Duignan.



A determined Toby McKay, Mens 20's Sharks player sees the score line within reach.

Womens 20's

Chasing their fourth title in a row, the Sharks disposed of all teams in their pool including last year's finalist the Rebels 5-1. The Rebels finished second and were destined to meet their Sydney rivals, the Mets, in the semis.

Both the Mets and the Razorbacks suffered losses in their round games, the former losing 0-3 to the Hunter Hornets and the latter losing 1-2 to the Mets. The Sharks versus Razorbacks semi was a close game until late in the second half when the Sharks pulled away for a 3-1 win.

The best for the Razorbacks were Peta Rogerson, Megan Lynch and Casey Clark. The clash of the Sydney teams saw a one sided event with the Rebels proving too strong for the Mets, winning 5-2. Best on field for the Mets were Michelle Garnett, Sally Christie and Kate Fitzsimmons.

The Sharks versus the Rebels was again a replay of the previous year's final which was an amazing feature of the 2001 titles. As in many of

the other divisions at this tournament, the defending champions again retained their title. In a game that went from one end of the field to the other at a constant pace, the score changed to produce a new leader on five occasions.

The Rebels were out to revenge last year's loss and appeared to have the game won until two late touchdowns by the Sharks saw them run out the winner, defeating the Rebels 7-6 in an extremely tight and entertaining game.

Elise Anthony was declared Player of the Final in a beaten team but despite the loss, players like Courtney Collings, Melissa McCall and Skye George shone for the Rebels. For the victors the stars were Missy Shaw - the Player of the Series, Roxanne Winder, Candace Winder, Katie Shaw and Rebecca Horrigan.

2001 NTL Final Youth Results

Men's 20
Sharks 8 Mets 2

Women's 20
Sharks 7 Rebels 6



Roxanne Winder running the ball.

2001 NATIONAL TOUCH LEAGUE CLUB CHAMPIONS



2001 Overall Points Table

1	SQBD Sharks	103
2	Sydney Metropolitan	95
3	Sydney Scorpions	80
4	Brisbane Cobras	77
4	Sunwest Razorbacks	77
6	Southern Suns	65
7	Hunter Western Hornets	57
8	Northern Eagles	49
9	NQ Tropical Cyclones	45
10	Crusaders	43
11	Sydney Rebels	33
12	Barbarians	12
13	Australian Defence Forces	6
14	Touchwest	3

Under 18's return to Coffs Harbour

*From 20 to 23 August, Schools
and Permit Holder teams
converged again on Coffs
Harbour for the Sixth
championships under the NTL
format.*

With Jamie Soward leading the way the Southern Suns **Boys 18's** were out to avenge last years defeat in the final by the Queensland State Secondary Schools. Unfortunately their quest came to a sudden halt in their first game against NSW CHS who trashed them 12-1 and then in their third round game against Central Queensland they lost 4-6.

Queensland on the other hand went through their preliminary rounds undefeated in Pool A, while in Pool B NSW CHS also were undefeated. The semis saw Queensland play Central Queensland whose only loss to date was 3-7 at the hands of CHS.

Although trying hard they were no match for the Title holder and went down 3-7. Best for Central Queensland was their MVP Matt Baker who was assisted by Daniel Higgins and David Zanette.

NSW CHS faced the Sydney Mets in the other semi and the Mets only loss was a 6-8 defeat at the hands of Queensland. Their luck continued to desert them when they were beaten soundly by CHS 11-6. Best for the Mets was their MVP Adam Springfield who was also supported by a strong game from Luke Rayner and Marc Walsh.



An anxious group of North Canberra Boys 18's awaiting the referees decision on a Touchdown

The final pitted the two undefeated teams against each other and in a game where one mistake could cost dearly the NSW CHS defence held off and Queensland skipped to an 8-5 victory. Best for the CHS side were Dane Allen (MVP) supported by Luke Ackroyd, Nash Beeby, Troy Malcolm and Aaron Tandek. For the victors David Conlon was their MVP and Adrian O'Shanesy the player of the final.

Others who stood out were Darryl Parker, Tory Hipperson, Graeme Clancy and Matthew Manz. Player of the Series was Joe Williams from the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges.



Joe Williams in action for NSW CCC

The **Girls 18's** saw Queensland (QSST) looking for their fifth title in a row. Going through their round games undefeated they were destined to meet strong opposition from then two other undefeated teams from pools B and C the NSW CHS side and the SQBD Sharks.

In the quarter finals these three teams had relatively easy game with Queensland defeating the Southern Suns 11-0 and NSW CHS winning 3-0 over the Sunshine Coast. The Sharks however although dominant just got home against the Northern Eagles 5-4 while NSW CCC managed to get on top of the Sydney Mets 3-2 in the fourth quarter final.

Semi final Touch is always tough as CHS found out in their game against the Sharks. A game that offered no quarter, the final result came close to full time with CHS getting home 3-2. Shaye Macleod (MVP), Biannca Johnson, Tamara Appo and Tara Mako all had strong games for the Sharks.

In the other semi Queensland just proved too strong for NSW CCC easily winning 10-1 in a lopsided contest. Best for the losers were Cassie Callinan (MVP), Melissa McCall, Claire Winchester and Kate Baseley.

Expecting a close game like last years final, Queensland skipped to an early lead and simply did not allow CHS into the game finally running our winners 5-0 and capturing their fifth consecutive title.

Best for CHS were Leah Mandell (MVP), Bianca Barnier, Casey Cunningham and Jessica Howe while for QSST Kelly McGennity was outstanding and a class above all players winning both the Player of the Series and Player of the Final Awards. She was supported by strong performances from Kate Adams, Roxanne Winder, Amanda Cran and Rachel Reid.



Although coming 13th the very young Northern Territory side gained a wealth of experience especially from coach and legend player, Bo de la Cruze

2001 National Schools Competition Finals Results

Girls Open

Queensland	8	NSW CHS	5
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Boys Open

Queensland	5	NSW CHS	0
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2002 Sixth NTL Championships attract crowds to Coffs Harbour

From 16/19th March teams again crowd into Coffs Harbour for the Annual National Touch League

Mens Open

Last years winners the Brisbane Cobras had high hopes of retaining their title when they arrived for the sixth NTL tournament. However their hopes were dashed when the Sydney Mets turned the table on last year's champions defeating the Cobras to win the 2002 Mens open title.

The scorching heat of the finals day saw a number of players and referees suffer from heat exhaustion. The play on the field was also hot with individual and team brilliance on display. The clash between cross border rivals was always going to have plenty of feeling in it and with the added fuel of the Cobras looking to win back-to-back titles, the game was poised on a knife edge.

The Mets led the Cobras and were in front at the half time break 3-1. At that point they were in control of the game. The second half saw a revival from the Cobras, who were asked by coach Ash Heiniger to "give it a dig" and be patient during the second half. They did that and almost pulled off the win, unfortunately time ran out on them.

The Mets coach David Collins was ecstatic with the victory, indicating that his young players who had experienced defeat last year were ready for whatever came their way this year. The Mets were the form team throughout the tournament and many of the punters present had predicted they would win the final in a canter. Whilst they did win, it was far from a canter.



Garry Sonda playing for his country was inspirational throughout the NTL leading his team to victory over the Cobras

The fast finishing Cobras scoring late in the second half to ensure the Mets worked hard all the way to the final whistle. The final result saw the Mets get home 5-4.

Best for the Cobras were Trent McDonal, Shane Duell and Craig Madders. The Mets were well served by Gary Sonda (Player of the Series), Paul Forrester, Steve Roberts, Jason Stanton, Jason Yee and Player of the Final Kurt Nowotny.

Coach Forrester described the win as "fantastic" and "an amazing feeling that has been a year in the making".

Womens Open

The Womens open National Touch League final was an exhibition in class touch by the Brisbane Cobras team when they defeated the Hunter Western Hornets 12-1. In a game that saw last year's runners-up determined to erase the bad memories of the past, they powered home to run away with the game. The Cobras scored early and were to classey for their southern opponents.

The Cobras were the form team of the competition and deserved winners. They defeated last year's winners Sydney Mets in the semi-final, whilst the Hornets defeated the Razorbacks in a close game in the other semi. On a day better suited to sitting by the beach rather than in the 40 degree heat in the centre of Coffs Harbour International Stadium, the Cobras fitness was the telling factor.

The Cobras showed that preparation pays off and steamrolled the ball from one end of the field to the other every time they gained possession, with their relentless efforts being rewarded time and again.



Kelly Woods playing for her country was inspirational in assisting her team to victory over the Hornets

The Hornets were plagued by injuries and went into the final under-strength, as a result the burden was spread across the park. The Hornets

were well served by Australian representative Karina Castle and young players Morgan Arndel and Amanda Henderson. Hornets coach Tony Howard said that the Cobras were a class act and an awesome team.

He indicated that his team could not match the speed of the Cobras. Howard said that four of his girls had never played at the level and it would hold them well for the future. This was the first appearance by a non-metropolitan team in the finals of any open division of the National Touch League and shows the benefit of the Permit system introduced by the Australian Touch Association in 1997.

Hornets were best served by Natalie Conway, Kellie Jean Miller, Karina Castle and Morgan Arndell. Cobras coach Gary Madders credited his team's performance to the skills and individual dedication to fitness.

The campaign started many months ago and a fair amount of work has gone into this performance. Madders pointed to the efforts of Rachel Reid as one of his best, which was reinforced when she was later awarded Player of the Final.

The Cobras had many good players throughout and were served well by Player of the Series Kelly Woods. Others to shine were Shelley Matcham, Katie Curtis and Sharon Martin.

Mixed Open

The Mixed open final was a close tussle, which saw the Sydney Scorpions too strong for the Sydney Mets. In an entertaining game the final scoreline favoured the Scorpions 7-5. The Scorpions who were third last year, were the form team at the tournament.

With early favourite Cobras beaten in the quarter finals, the Scorpions, had preformed strongly and looked likely winners after they defeated last year's winners the Sharks in the semi-final..

Meanwhile the Mets defeated a hugely improved Sydney Rebels in the other semi-final to secure a position in the main game. Scorpion's coach Terry Cooper expected his team to do well and thought they would be favourites. The Scorpions came from behind to win the game, something that they had mastered having done it three times throughout the tournament.

The Scorpions were a better team in all areas in the final and best for the beaten Mets were Player of the Final, Christina Frost, Natalie Chenhall, Jason Hunt and Paul Dwyer.

In the end the experience of Tony Eltakchi., Phil Jarrett together with the brilliance of Jamie Chan was instrumental in the victory. Player of the Final was Mets player Christina Frost, while Player of the series went to veteran campaigner Tony Eltakchi.

2002 NTL Final Results

Men's Open

Mets 5 Cobras 4

Women's Open

Cobras 12 Hornets 1

Mixed Open

Scorpions 7 Mets 5

National Touch League 2002

Overall Placing

Teams	Men	Wm	Mx	#
Sydney Mets	15	10	12	37
Brisbane Cobras	12	15	8	35
Gold Coast Sharks	10	6	10	26
Sydney Scorpions	8	3	15	26
Sydney Rebels	5	7	9	21
NQ Cyclones	9	4	6	19
Sunwest Razorbacks	7	9	2	18
Southern Suns	1	8	7	16
Hunter Hornets	2	12	-	14
Crusaders	6	5	3	14
Barbarians	3	2	4	9
Northern Eagles	4	1	1	6

***Seniors NTL enter
their fifth year with
titles on the line
and bragging right
up for grabs***

***Sharks and Scorpions battle to be
the first Mens 30's team to win
three titles***

Mens 30

After winning the first two titles the Sharks brought a team to Coffs confident of knocking off the Scorpions who were chasing their thirds title in a row. At the completion of the preliminary rounds both teams had suffered one loss. The Scorpions 1-6 against their Sydney rivals the Mets and the Sharks 3-5 against the Scorpions.



Phil Jarrett in NSW colours played a major role in keeping the Scorpions in the game during the Final

The semi finals produced some great Touch especially in the Sharks – Mets game which was eventually won by the Sharks 6-4. Best for the Mets were Barry Clemas, George Ornelas, Jamie Black and Dom Squadrito. The other semi saw the Scorpions run away with the game against the Cobras 7-3. Best for the Cobras were Dave Farrell, Kieran Trenerry and Ron Nordberg.

The final was going to put one team on three wins while the other remained on two. Only time would tell, if the Scorpions could make it three in a row, or if the Sharks would ruin their party. Corey Foster drove the Sharks to the scoreline

and each time they scored Phil Jarrett drove the Scorpions back.

Finally the Sharks prevailed winning an entertaining game 5-4. Best for the Scorpions was Player of the Series and Player of the Final Tony Eltachi although pundits who watched thought Phil Jarrett played a better game in the final. Others who stood out were Stewart Syron, Graham Beale and Craig Nicholls. The Sharks were best served by Dave Raper, Corey Foster, Peter Tong, Andrew Willett and Patrick Grehan.

Mens 35

The Crusaders came to town expecting to win their third title in a row in the Mens 35 and fourth overall out of five tournaments. Their only hiccup was in 1999 when the Mets stole the title from them 4-2 in the final.

After the round games the Crusaders found themselves in third spot on the table after losses to the Scorpions 3-7 and the Mets 5-7. Their confidence got a boost when they played disciplined Touch to defeat the Mets 4-2 in their semi final clash despite strong games from Andy Yaingou (Player of the Series), Steve Kolenko and Scott McLeod.

The undefeated Scorpions clashed with the Brisbane Cobras in the other semis and after defeating them 5-1 in the round game they set about demoralizing them with a 7-0 victory in the semis. Best for the Cobras were Stephen McIntyre, Sean Slinger, Peter Kavanagh and Trevor Beasley.

“Once you make the final anyone can win” a quote often made by aspiring team and echoed by the Crusaders, who believing in themselves, they fancied their chances. The earlier losses were put aside as they approached the final



The three Cheung boys who help the Scorpions to victory; David, Jeff and Michael

hurdle, however their euphoria was short lived. The Scorpions came at them with guns blazing and with legend New Zealand player Peter Walters (Player of the Final) leading the charge the Crusaders was no match for the Sydneysiders.

Peter was ably supported by Jeff, Michael and David Cheung, Mark Springfield, Tim Kitchingham, Peter Wandl and Anthony Cridland. The Crusaders went down to the star studded Scorpions 7-3 despite a strong game from John Samin, Robin Kildare and Mark Hearnden.

Mens 40

After coming second in 1999 the Sydney Mets put together a strong group who won the 40's title the following two years and who turned up at Coffs hoping to make it three in a row.



Steve Cullen starring for the Scorpions

They came down to earth in the opening game when the Brisbane Cobras defeated them in a close 7-6 encounter and went on to steal top spot on the table after the round games. Mets came in second and played the Southern Suns in the semis who came in third.

Fourth place went to Northern Eagles who faced the Cobras in the semis. After playing the Cobras

in the last round game and losing only 2-4 the Eagles gave themselves a chance of upsetting the Cobras in the Semis.

However it was not to be and the Cobras won comfortably 3-0. Best for the Eagles were Mark Jansson, Steve Hancock, Wayne Saunders and Brett Newby. In the Southern Suns and Sydney Mets semis the Suns were excepted to put the Mets to the test.

Unfortunately the Mets got on top early and didn't allow the Suns into the game wining comfortably 3-0. Best for the Suns were Brian Brown, John Clune, Dave Smithers and Steve Morris.

The final saw the Cobras and Mets clash in a battle fitting for a Roman arena. With the lead changing constantly the Mets finally got on top and won the contest 4-3. Best for the Cobras were Don Bartz, John Smith, Kevin Hickey and Greg Young while for the Mets Jeff McGhie (Player of the Final), Victor Tagliaferro (Player of the Series), Steve Cullen and Emmanuel Buhagiar stood out.

Mens 45

The Northern Eagles had won the first two and the Sunwest Razorbacks the next two titles and one of them was expected to go to the lead 3-2 in the tile race. The Eagle's plan to defeat the Razorbacks in the final to earn bragging rights was short lived when they lost two round games and ended up meeting their old rival in the semi finals.

The battle of the two champion sides was fast and fierce despite the age of the athletes. At the final whistle the Razorbacks had edged out the Eagles 4-3. For the vanquished Peter Vincent, Michael Prowse, Barry Draws and Ray Bastian had strong games.

North Queensland Tropical Cyclones thought they were in with a good chance in their semis clash after defeating former champions the Northern Eagles 4-3 in their round game. Their semi against the Southern Suns however proved to be a tough hurdle and after early promise they faded away to a 1-4 loss.

Best for the Cyclones were Ray Bastian, Robert Tranberg, Max Bryant, David Mann and Bruce Johnson.