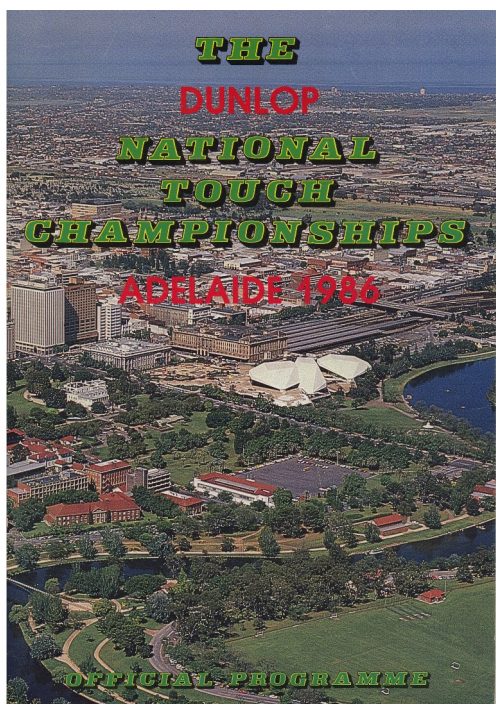


# 1986 The Sixth National Championships

*The Sixth Australian Nationals were held in March in Glenelg. We take up the story with Peter Rooney's fascinating and humorous account.*



*The 1986 Championship were played, from 9 to 16 March in Adelaide, and were smack in the middle of the South Australian centenary celebrations. The opening ceremony was timed to coincide with the arrival of the Queen and Prince Phillip at Glenelg.*

*But it was not to be. History records that a fierce southerly forced the Royal barge to skip the Glenelg landing and detour instead to Port Adelaide. This meant the opening march — an impressive affair — was minus many of its intended spectators.*

*The games themselves were played at the University of Adelaide's magnificent grounds at West Beach and ran for the full week without a hitch. Our accumulated experience in ground markings and other essential facets of preparation also proved invaluable. The grounds were so good in fact those players complained about the grass being too slippery. There has to be a message in that somewhere!*



*Queensland Women's Open Team: 1986. Back: Paul Sherriff (Physio.), Jill Bonner, Sharron Mitchell-Cowen, Fiona Mahoney, Sue Paxton, Sue McWhirter. Middle: Bill Ker (Tour Manager), David Coe (Assistant Tour Manager), Lily-Jane Collins, Karyn Coombes, Kym Truscott, Morey Creed (Coach), Gwynne Ker (Manager). Front: Glenys Coe (Vice-Captain), Diane Lowry, Pat Schipp.*

*The finals were played at the Sturt Football Club grounds with New South Wales beating Queensland in all seven divisions including the Over-40 challenge. The club's home colours, sky-blue and royal blue, led to Queensland accusations that their presence was a New South Wales ploy to put them off their game.*

*Queensland Women's Open side proved unlucky, losing the shootout decider to New South Wales after beating the same team during the week, for the first time in the history of the game.*

## **The Queen's motorcade is late, but Kerry Norman entertains the Crowd.**

*As Peter Rooney has stated, Her Majesty did not appear! The players soon became fidgety and restless, so relays and sprints were the order of the day.*

*It was interesting to note that the great Kerry Norman won the women's sprint and at the end of the Nationals remained in Adelaide to*

compete in the National Surf Life Saving titles. She completed the double by winning the Australian Life Saving Beach sprint title the following weekend. All in all, this was a great feat due to the fact that she ran with a cut foot, which had not healed.



Kerry Norman and Gai Taylor getting down to the line

### The Queen had to wait.

Two junior players from the winning Queensland team who went on to make their mark in senior ranks were Craig Pierce and Allison McWhirter. While for the New South Wales team one of the junior players went on to captain her State and Country in Women's Open was none other than Katrina Maher.

In the Men's Over 30s division, New South Wales took a battering in the rounds, being defeated by the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland.

However, they showed their strength in the semi-finals, beating the Australian Capital Territory 5-0, and then in the final disposing of Queensland by 3-0. Victoria came fourth and Army fifth.

The Mens 35s saw the only clean sweep by New South Wales, going through undefeated and winning the final from Queensland, 3-2. South Australia came third and the Australian Capital Territory was fourth.

The Queensland Women did not lose a game, defeating New South Wales 1-0 during the round. At the conclusion of full-time in the final the score was level at 2-2, so the dreaded shoot-out was employed. Unfortunately for Queensland, they were defeated, and New South Wales won the championships with a 3-2 scoreline. Kerry Norman was named Player of the Series, even though many felt Karen Smith played an awesome series. The Australian Capital Territory came third, and the Northern Territory fourth.

### 1986 National Championship Final Results

#### Men's Open

NSW 2                  Queensland 1

#### Women's Open

NSW 3                  Queensland 2

*Extra time*

#### Mixed Open

Queensland 3        NSW 1

#### Men's 30s

NSW 3                  Queensland 0

#### Men's 35s

NSW 3                  Queensland 2

#### Mixed Juniors

Queensland 8        NSW 5

### 1986 All-stars of Touch

Mark Boland (NSW), Garry Lawless (ACT), Michael Burke (Qld), Eddie Basile (NSW), John Christopher (NSW), Kendra Hall (ACT), Steven Clements (NSW), Greg Devitt (NSW), Michael Jonson (NSW), Arthur Tsakissiris (Qld), Karyn Coombes (Qld), Joanne Henwood (NSW), Craig Pierce (Qld)

**Coach of the Year:** Graham Rogers (ACT)

**Manager of the Year:** Ian Curtis (NSW)

**Referee of the Year:** Lance Harrigan (NSW)

**Official of the Year:** Phil Smith (ATA) (Life Membership)

### Mens Competition Tables 1986

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	5	3		44	12
NSW	9	8	1		68	8
NT	8	4	4		25	42
Queensland	9	8	1		65	2
South Australia	8	2	6		15	54
Tasmania	8		8		15	57
Victoria	8	2	6		23	70
West Australia	8	4	4		24	34
	66	33	33	0	279	279

### Mixed Juniors Competition Tables 1986

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	3		40	22
NSW	8	6	2		59	22
NT	7	3	4		42	32
Queensland	8	8			74	14
South Australia	7	1	6		20	72
Tasmania	6		6		10	85
Victoria	7	3	4		36	34
	50	25	25	0	281	281

### Womens Competition Tables 1986

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	4	2	2	27	21
NSW	9	8	1		66	4
NT	8	3	4	1	31	45
Queensland	9	7	1	1	52	6
South Australia	8	3	4	1	30	34
Tasmania	8		8		11	75
Victoria	8	3	5		12	36
West Australia	8	2	5	1	37	45
	66	30	30	6	266	266

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1986

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	3	2	1	17	14
ARMY	5		5		5	26
NSW	7	5	2		36	7
Queensland	6	5	1		26	9
Victoria	6	1	4	1	10	38
	30	14	14	2	94	94

### Mixed Competition Tables 1986

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	4	2		25	7
ARMY	6	2	4		25	45
NSW	7	6	1		79	9
Queensland	7	5	2		34	11
South Australia	6	2	4		13	45
Victoria	6		6		3	62
	38	19	19	0	179	179

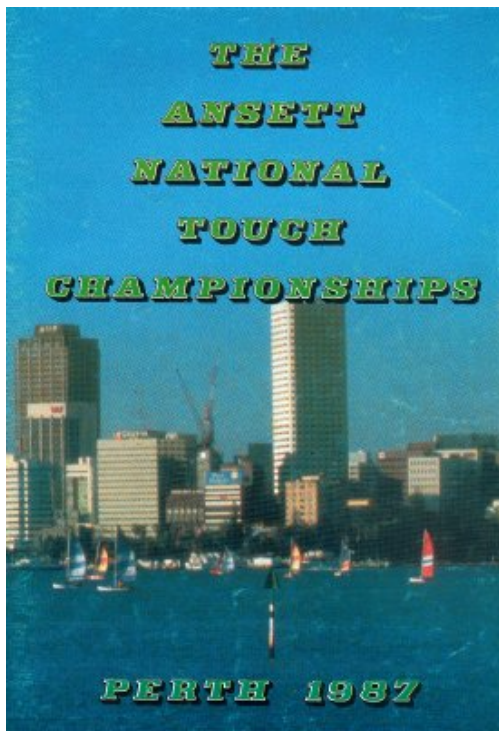
### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1986

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	2	4		14	22
NSW	7	7			44	6
NT	6		6		7	44
Queensland	7	5	2		32	11
South Australia	6	2	3	1	10	26
West Australia	6	2	3	1	20	18
	38	18	18	2	127	127

# 1987

## *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 the two teams were.

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 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's 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 Sparks. 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 Mens 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 Mens 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

NSW 4 drew Queensland 4  
NSW 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

### Mens Competition Tables 1987

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	3	4	1	20	19
NSW	9	7		2	56	8
NT	7	3	4		12	21
Queensland	9	7		2	51	10
South Australia	7	1	4	2	11	29
Tasmania	7	1	5	1	12	27
Victoria	7		7		6	52
West Australia	8	5	3		27	29
	62	27	27	8	195	195

### Womens Competition Tables 1987

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	4	3	1	26	18
NSW	9	8		1	70	2
NT	8	4	4		21	32
Queensland	9	7	1	1	48	5
South Australia	7	2	5		12	26
Tasmania	7		7		3	81
Victoria	7	1	5	1	13	23
West Australia	7	3	4		14	20
	62	29	29	4	207	207

### 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)

### Mixed Competition Tables 1987

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	4	2		31	13
ARMY	5	1	4		9	41
NSW	7	7			68	2
NT	6	2	4		15	37
Queensland	7	4	3		26	15
West Australia	5		5		4	45
	36	18	18	0	153	153

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1987

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	3		28	15
ARMY	6	2	4		9	21
NSW	8	8			43	10
NT	6	1	4	1	4	17
Queensland	8	5	2	1	37	15
Victoria	7	3	4		16	25
West Australia	6		6		2	36
	48	23	23	2	139	139

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1987

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	5	2	1	2	8	7
NSW	5	5			30	2
NT	5		5		11	35
Queensland	5	3	1	1	16	4
South Australia	5	2	3		5	8
West Australia	5	1	3	1	11	25
	30	13	13	4	81	81

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1987

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	5	2	1	2	18	7
NSW	6	5		1	33	7
NT	4		4		4	32
Queensland	6	3	2	1	17	10
West Australia	5	1	4		11	27
	26	11	11	4	83	83

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

*On 24th 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 Boy's under 16 divisions 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 Girl's 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 Boy's 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  
Final Results**

**Boys 16**

Queensland 6      ACT 4

**Girls 16**

Queensland 2      South Australia 0

**Boys 18**

Queensland 5      NSW 2

**Girls 18**

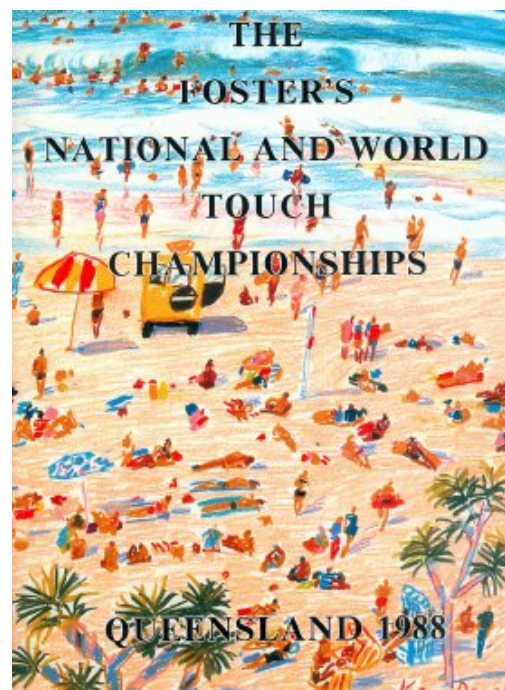
Queensland 5      NSW 2

## 1988 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,*



### **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.*

*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:*



### **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.

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 National Championship Final Results

##### Men's Open

Queensland 3 NSW 1

##### Women's Open

Queensland 5 NSW 1

##### Mixed Open

Queensland 3 NSW 2

##### Mens 30's Division

NSW 2 Queensland 1

##### Mens 35's Division

NSW 3 Queensland 3

##### Mens 40's Division

Queensland 2 NSW 0

##### Women's 25's Division

Queensland 2 NSW 0

##### Mixed Juniors Division

NSW 6 Queensland 6

NSW won in extra time

### 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)



### Hall of Fame

*1988 witnessed the first inductees into the Australian Touch Association's Hall of Fame in a ceremony at SeaWorld on the Gold Coast.*



Karen Smith and Terry Jacks; the inaugural inductees into the ATA's Hall of Fame

### Mens Competition Tables 1988

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	4	3	1	34	19
ARMY	7	3	3	1	19	35
NSW	9	7	1	1	59	7
NT	7	2	5		19	46
Queensland	9	8		1	78	5
South Australia	8	4	4		23	37
Tasmania	7	1	6		11	50
West Australia	7		7		9	53
	62	29	29	4	252	252

### Womens Competition Tables 1988

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	2	1	35	9
NSW	8	5	1	2	59	11
NT	6	1	4	1	10	45
Queensland	8	7		1	66	4
South Australia	7	2	4	1	11	19
Tasmania	6		6		1	69
West Australia	6	2	4		10	35
	48	21	21	6	192	192

### Mixed Competition Tables 1988

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	3	3		22	17
ARMY	6	1	5		16	34
NSW	6	6			55	6
Queensland	7	5	2		56	11
Victoria	5		5		1	82
	30	15	15	0	150	150

### Mixed Juniors Competition Tables 1988

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7		6	1	14	57
NSW	8	5	2	1	66	15
Queensland	8	7		1	66	14
West Australia	7	1	5	1	11	71
	30	13	13	4	157	157

### Womens 25's Competition Tables 1988

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	1	4	1	4	17
ARMY	5		5		3	41
NSW	6	6			36	1
NT	6	2	3	1	6	19
Queensland	7	5	2		33	4
	30	14	14	2	82	82

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1988

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	5	3		26	17
ARMY	7		7		11	43
NSW	9	7	2		48	7
NT	7	2	5		9	29
Queensland	9	9			51	5
Tasmania	8	3	5		15	30
Victoria	7	2	5		22	35
West Australia	9	4	5		25	41
	64	32	32	0	207	207

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1988

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	3	4		19	14
ARMY	6	2	3	1	13	21
NSW	8	7	1		41	5
NT	6	1	4	1	10	22
Queensland	8	7	1		39	4
South Australia	7	3	4		15	22
Tasmania	6		6		7	56
	48	23	23	2	144	144

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1988

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	2	3	1	16	21
NSW	7	6	1		30	9
NT	5		5		4	21
Queensland	6	5	1		22	5
West Australia	6	1	4	1	12	28
	30	14	14	2	84	84



Gwynne Ker manager of the Year 1988

*Second Year of School  
Touch and Queensland  
can't repeat clean sweep.  
From 5 to the 8 September the  
Australian Schools Touch titles*

## *held captive the youth of Touch in this country.*

The runaway victories of the previous year did not eventuate for Queensland in the second year of school's competition. In the under 16 Boy's division, Queensland could manage only three wins, two losses and two draws to finish third. Played on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, eighteen teams turned up to participate in the second event for the Australian Secondary Schools Touch Association.

An ACT side starring a young Michael (Bones) McGovern showed what hard grit can do against a more fancied opponent. Losing the first game 1-2 and drawing 0-0 in the second ACT were given a passage to the finals by defeating Tasmania 20-0 in the semis.

The Northern Territory team were rank outsiders at the start of the tournament but after recording a draw against Queensland in the first round they went on to defeat them 2-1 in the second round and 4-3 in the semis.

Whilst their surnames are synonymous with elite athleticism in the Territory the Seden and Bonson boys linked to get their team into the finals. Unfortunately the more talented ACT side defeated them 7-3.

In the Boy's Open division it was a different story. Queensland was led by stars of the future including Rodney Thorogood and Greg Ross. They sailed through undefeated winning the Semi 13-1 against South Australia but having a much tougher time in defeating NSW in the final 4-3.

New South Wales did not contest either of the under 16 divisions which paved the way for a determined Queensland outfit to take control of the Girls 16's. Future stars like Dominique Curtis, Angela and Catherine Barr dominated to help the side win its six round games then record a 12-1 victory in the semis against Tasmania and a 10-0 win in the final against the Northern Territory.

An awesome girl's team from NSW simply dominated the Open division. Players like Christy Budd, Jody Collins, Sue Dorrington, Louise Eliot, Cathy Gorman, Meg Sailsbury, Jennie Williams, Donna Russell and Nicole

Wellington all went on to become stars in their adult touch life. Drawing 1-1 in their round game with Queensland, a determined NSW team come out and recorded a 3-0 win in the finals.

### **Boys 16's Competition Tables 1988**

<b>Including Finals</b>						
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>
A.C.T.	8	6	1	1	57	12
NT	8	3	4	1	37	24
Queensland	7	3	2	2	28	9
Tasmania	7		7		2	79
	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>

### **Girls 16's Competition Tables 1988**

<b>Including Finals</b>						
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>
A.C.T.	7	3	3	1	12	20
NT	8	3	5		13	33
Queensland	8	8			67	2
Tasmania	7		6	1	4	41
	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>

### **Boys Open Competition Tables 1988**

<b>Including Finals</b>						
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>
A.C.T.	5	2	3		12	7
NSW	6	4	2		33	10
Queensland	6	6			42	7
South Australia	5	1	4		7	34
Tasmania	4		4		1	37
	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>

### **Girls Open Competition Tables 1988**

<b>Including Finals</b>						
	<b>P</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>
A.C.T.	4		4		0	33
NSW	6	5		1	47	4
Queensland	6	4	1	1	28	7
Queensland (2)	5	2	3		11	20
South Australia	5	1	4		7	29
	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>

# ***1989 No National Championships for Adult players but Schools put on a show.***

***The adult Touch community has a break from National Competition due to timing of next event in Darwin in 1990.***

While Open and Senior players gathers finances together for the trek to Darwin in 1990, School Touch was celebrating only its third year on the Touch sporting calendar.

From 18 to the 21 September, teams gathered at Gosford on the New South Wales Central Coast to contest the School Touch Championships.

New South Wales had entered both the Boys and Girls 16's division for the first time and posed a threat to all the other teams especially past winners Queensland and ACT.

They proved they were worthy opponents by going through the rounds undefeated and winning 11-2 against South Australia in the semis and defeating Queensland 7-2 in the final. Stars for NSW were Jamie Thomas and Brad Wardrobe. Craig Season was Queensland's best.

The game expected to be the final between ACT and Queensland eventuated in the semis with Queensland running out easy winners 7-2, the same margin they lost the final. Last year's beaten finalist NT failed to impress and finished fifth.

Queensland's 16's Girl's dominance in this division was set to remain with 14 straight victories since the inception of the event. They dominated again going through the round games

undefeated (3-3 draw with NSW) and getting to the final by defeating South Australia 7-0. Their winning streak of 20 games came to a halt in the final when a determined NSW team won 3-1.

The star studded Queensland team was shocked by the result boasting players who later became legends when playing for their State and Country. Renee Clarke, Alison Kay and Natalie Wilkinson had no answer to the girls from NSW who included Kylie Small, Renee Andrews, Joanne Hensley and Lindsey Watsford.

The Boy's Open division only had four teams and past winners Queensland were expected to dominate again. Fourteen games without a loss saw them falter to a determined NSW side in round three and go down to the home team 5-2.

It was obvious that they were not going to breeze through this year as they were held to a draw on both occasion they played the Australian Capital Territory (1-1 and 2-2). As there were no semis, just a straight final, all depended on the last round game against NSW.

Craig Slavin and Harry Chow stepped up to the mark and put their team into the finals with a resounding defeat of NSW 5-2. In the final, Queensland faced a strong ACT team led by Owen Gregory and Michael McGovern, narrowly defeating them 3-2.

In the Girl's Open division the current champions NSW knew they were not going to retain their tile without a strong performance. The Theresa Begley-Bachelor coached Queensland team would make them fight for every touchdown.

NSW were winning their round games comfortably until they ran into Queensland who held them to a 3-3 draw. An 11-0 win against ACT in the semis saw them go into the final against Queensland as firm favourites. But no one told Queensland that after they defeated South Australia 7-0.

In a hard fought game that reached great excitement throughout, the home side eventually prevailed to win 3-1. Dominique Curtis, Leanne Gray, Janine Forward and the Barr sisters tried hard for Queensland but were out shined by Jody Collins, Louise Eliot, Michelle Clough, Nicole Wellington, Donna Russell and the Donovan sisters from NSW.

# 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)

### Mens Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	9	6	3		33	21
ADF	8		7	1	5	31
NSW	10	8	1	1	66	9
NT	9	5	4		16	26
Queensland	10	9		1	82	6
South Australia	9	1	7	1	12	47
Tasmania	8	4	4		20	29
Victoria	8	1	5	2	14	45
West Australia	9	2	5	2	11	45
	80	36	36	8	259	259

### Womens Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	9	5	4		33	21
ADF	9	2	7		9	53
NSW	10	9	1		82	4
NT	9	5	4		24	28
Queensland	10	9	1		51	9
South Australia	9	6	3		30	16
Tasmania	8		8		3	48
Victoria	9	2	7		8	31
West Australia	9	3	6		13	43
	82	41	41	0	253	253

### Mixed Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	3	4		31	16
ADF	6		6		2	87
NSW	7	6		1	51	5
Queensland	8	4	3	1	37	13
	28	13	13	2	121	121

### Women 27's Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
NSW	7	4	2	1	23	4
NT	6		6		1	36
Queensland	7	5	1	1	22	6
	20	9	9	2	46	46

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	10	6	3	1	24	15
ADF	8		7	1	4	37
NSW	10	10			43	5
NT	9	1	7	1	6	34
Queensland	9	4	4	1	23	9
	46	21	21	4	100	100

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	2	1	21	14
ADF	6	1	5		7	21
NSW	8	8			46	2
NT	6		6		2	48
Queensland	8	4	2	2	24	11
West Australia	7	2	4	1	15	19
	42	19	19	4	115	115

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1990

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	1	6		6	26
NSW	7	5		2	14	3
NT	6	1	5		4	15
Queensland	8	5	1	2	27	7
	28	12	12	4	51	51



Stacey Gregory 1990 All Star Player and Legend Mixed Player

## ***1990 National Schools Championships***

***Adelaide played host to the fourth Schools Championships where a record 24 teams participated***

NSW and Queensland were again expected to dominate the championships played between 16 and 20 September, however the host State had other ideas. NSW didn't attend in the Boys 16's division which gave South Australia the opportunity to show how good they were.

Going through the eight rounds undefeated with two draws against Queensland they easily won the semi against ACT 6-3. Their opponents Queensland also went through the preliminary rounds undefeated and scored an 11-0 win in the semis against Northern Territory.

The final went one way then changed again until the final whistle when the score read 3-3 with Queensland winning as they finished higher on the competition table. A disappointed South Australian team was physiological about coming second saying that if Queensland could beat them they were equal champions. ACT finished third, Northern Territory fourth and Tasmania fifth.

Starring for South Australia were Corey Farmer, Andrew McKeegan, Kelby and Troy Murphy, Steven Smith and Scott Barton. For Queensland their best were Mark Kelly, Damien Fry, Shane Vine and none better than a future Australia World Cup winning captain Neil Ward.

In the Boy's Open division Queensland and NSW had already established a health rivalry and this was again translated into fierce competition for the title. NSW wanted revenge for their third in 1989 and after defeating Queensland 4-1 in the round game Queensland's title looked precarious.

After disposing of ACT 8-1 (last year's threat) they won their semis against Western Australia 10-0 and felt confident of lifting the title against Queensland in the final. Queensland struggled against ACT in the semis despite the 5-1 score and was definite underdogs for the main event.

Michael McLaughlin, Darryl Fry, Shane Heaton, Robert Saltner and Harry Chow stamped their mark on the game and pushed past NSW to record a 2-1 victory. Best for NSW were Michael Blyss, Jeff Bartlett, Jeff Wellington, Scott Danswan and Jason Zabelo.

Defending champions in the Girls 16's division didn't turn up so Queensland eyes this year's title and had no difficulty in winning ten straight games to claim it back, defeating host state South Australia 6-0 in the final.

Amanda Baska, Sharyn Williams, Angela Zavros, Simone Eggers, Natalie Wilkinson and Adrianna Nissel all starred for the winners while Jodie Surman, Brooke Murphy and Leigh Johnston were the best for South Australia. ACT came third, Tasmania fourth and Northern Territory fifth.

The Girl's Open division was again a test between NSW and Queensland. The defending champions Queensland were entitled to favouritism after defeating NSW in the round game 5-3. However, NSW, after defeating ACT 15-2 in the semis, were confident of reversing the earlier score against Queensland.

Queensland players Kim Wittenberg, Alison Kay, Rebecca Chesterton and Justine Smith stood tall in trying to imposing their will on the NSW team but went down fighting. The final score was 5-4.

Julie Hart, Joanne Hensley, Kylie Small, Kenny Lawler and Nicole McLachlan with the rest of their team mate repelled the Queensland advance to record two victories a piece after four years of competition. Queensland was the overall winners

### **Girls 16**

Queensland 6 South Australia 0

### **Boys 16**

Queensland 3 South Australia 3

### **Girls Open**

NSW 5 Queensland 4

### **Boys Open**

Queensland 2 NSW 1

# 1991

## 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 contention. 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, the 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. 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 Over30's 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)



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.

### Mens Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	3		22	30
ADF	7	3	4		21	45
NSW	8	7	1		71	15
NT	6		6		8	37
Queensland	8	7	1		86	14
South Australia	6	2	4		15	36
West Australia	6	1	5		10	56
	48	24	24	0	233	233

### Womens Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	3		32	18
ADF	6		6		4	74
NSW	8	8			87	11
NT	6	2	4		22	35
Queensland	8	5	3		70	25
South Australia	7	4	3		26	22
West Australia	6	1	5		10	66
	48	24	24	0	251	251

### Mixed Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7		7		5	58
NSW	7	7			44	9
Queensland	8	4	4		40	22
	22	11	11	0	89	89

### Women 27's Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7		7		4	48
NSW	7	6	1		30	6
Queensland	8	5	3		30	10
	22	11	11	0	64	64

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	10	5	3	2	39	17
ADF	8		7	1	8	66
NSW	10	9		1	90	8
NT	9	1	7	1	8	70
Queensland	9	5	3	1	39	23
	46	20	20	6	184	184

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	2	3	1	20	15
ADF	6	2	3	1	16	30
NSW	7	7			53	6
NT	5		5		0	43
Queensland	7	5	2		26	6
West Australia	5	1	4		14	29
	36	17	17	2	129	129

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1991

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7		6	1	7	39
ADF	7	1	5	1	16	24
NSW	8	7	1		34	6
Queensland	8	6	2		25	13
	30	14	14	2	82	82



Darren Shelley 1990 All Star Player and Legend  
Mixed Player

## ***1991 National Schools Championships held on the Gold Coast***

***Sunny Queensland hosted the fifth Schools titles between and 7 September.***

Queensland's Boys 16's recorded an undefeated streak of 20 straight games by taking out the 1991 final on the Gold Coast defending their title and defeating South Australia in the final 7-1.

Again without NSW present it was up to the other states to wrestle the crown from Queensland. In the semis the Australian Capital Territory side tried in vain and went down 11-0, while South Australia had a tight 4-0 win over the Northern Territory to progress to the finals.

Steven Smith, Scott Barton, Cameron Chapman and Paul Jarvis tried hard for the challengers but the champions were too good and were best served by Michael O'Rourke, David Zimmerie and Mark Lawson.

Queensland's dominance of the Boy's Open division was put to the test in the first game of the series when a determined NSW team defeated them 4-3. So close was the game but after suffering losses in round games before, Queensland's confidence remained high despite a second round 1-1 draw against NSW.

They were sure it was their turn to win in the third encounter. Their confidence took a backward step when in the last round game the Queensland Schools number two team held them to a 2-2 draw. It was shaky ground when they met them again in the semis and just got over the line with a 2-1 win.

NSW progressed with a 7-2 win over ACT and proceeded to break a four year winning streak by Queensland just defeating them for the title 3-2. Jason Zabielo, Neville Donovan, Aaron Jelacic and Tony McCosker starred for NSW while Queensland was best served by Neil Ward, Craig Searson, Damien Fry and Craig Madders.

Queensland's dominance of the Girls 16's was never more evident in that of the 41 games played from the first in 1987 to the final in 1991.

they had lost only one game and that was 1-3 to NSW in the final of 1989. They simply dominated this year winning their ten games and recoding 113 touchdowns for and only 1 scored against them.

Kylie Griffith, Sharyn Williams, Belinda Laffey, Angela and Amy Zavros and Angela Daley together with their team mates tore apart the opposite in a manner not seen before at this level. ACT came second, Western Australian and Northern Territory third with South Australia fifth.

After two series wins a piece in the Girls Open division the big question on everyone lips was who is going to take a 3-2 series lead? It was always going to be the two powerhouse States meeting in the final and with close defeats in the round games 1-2 and 2-3 Queensland felt very confident of reversing last years result in this years final.

Amanda Bliss, Suzanne Coote, Janelle Hansen, Kristy Richmond and Danielle Williams put on a brave show for Queensland never giving up despite NSW dominating the territory and score line with a 6-1 victory over the host State.

Best on the park for NSW were Kylie Small, Joanne Hensley, Julie Hart, Nicole Cooper, Nicole McLachlan and Amanda Roberts. Legend Player and coach of the Girls team Karen Smith described it as one of the best wins by any NSW Girls team.

### **1991 National Schools Competition Finals Results**

#### **Girls 16**

Queensland	6	ACT	0
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#### **Boys 16**

Queensland	3	South Australia	1
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#### **Girls Open**

NSW	6	Queensland	1
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#### **Boys Open**

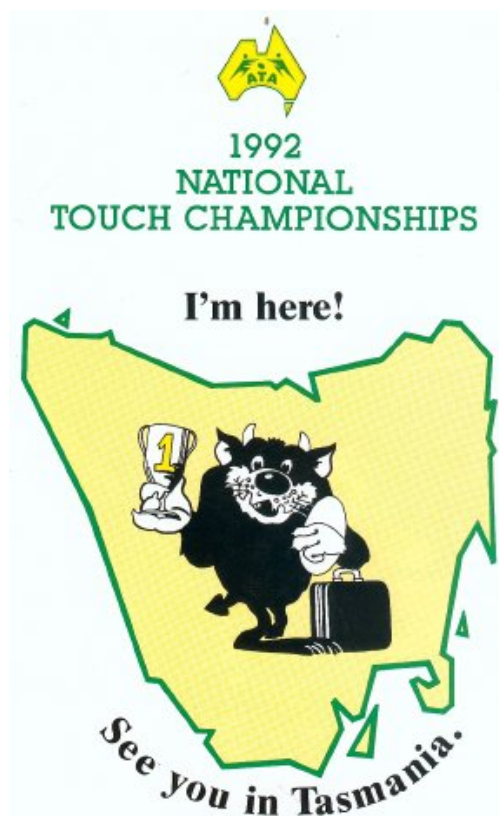
NSW	3	Queensland	2
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# 1992 Eleventh National Championships

*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."*

### 1992 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), Jamie 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.*

### 1992 National Championships Results

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

### Mens Competition Tables 1992

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	3	3	1	31	18
ADF	7	3	3	1	12	28
NSW	8	6	2		46	11
NT	6	1	4	1	12	39
Queensland	8	8			51	10
Tasmania	6	1	4	1	8	19
West Australia	6		6		5	40
	48	22	22	4	165	165

### Womens Competition Tables 1992

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	4	3		19	24
ADF	7	1	6		11	46
NSW	9	9			60	1
NT	8	4	4		30	32
Queensland	9	7	2		63	5
South Australia	8	4	4		22	22
Tasmania	7	2	5		14	35
West Australia	7		7		3	57
	62	31	31	0	222	222

### Women 27's Competition Tables 1992

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
NSW	8	5	2	1	36	12
NT	7		6	1	6	65
Queensland	8	7		1	68	5
Tasmania	7	1	5	1	8	36
	30	13	13	4	118	118

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1992

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	9	4	5		19	28
NSW	10	9	1		64	6
NT	9	1	7	1	5	61
Queensland	10	8	2		47	4
Tasmania	8		7	1	8	44
	46	22	22	2	143	143

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1992

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	6	4	2		15	17
ADF	5	1	4		6	22
NSW	7	4	3		28	10
NT	5		5		4	29
Queensland	7	7			35	4
Tasmania	6	2	4		18	24
	36	18	18	0	106	106

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1992

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	9	4	4	1	34	18
NSW	10	9	1		62	8
Queensland	10	7	3		41	11
Tasmania	8		8		1	86
West Australia	9	2	6	1	30	45
	46	22	22	2	168	168



**Queensland Touch Association Office Staff**

From Left: Gwynne Ker, Bev Roberts, Danielle Williams and Jodie Harris

***1992: Parklea to be the last of the combined Schools National Championships***

***Parklea in Sydney would be the stage for the final Schools Nationals involving the 16 years and Open Divisions.***

September 24 saw the last game played where the 16 year's division players could watch their school idols in the Open's division perform. The lack of States competing in the premier division was causing concern for the organisers of the Australian Secondary Schools Touch Titles.

It was time for a rethink on the States participation at the highest level of schools Touch and the introduction of regional teams playing alongside Queensland, NSW and other State School teams was the future option.

In the Boys 16's division, Queensland had an undefeated streak of 20 games and was looking for their third consecutive title. NSW were there to threaten them after a two years absence and it was yet to be seen if they could stop the might Queenslanders.

The first team Queensland came up against was Northern Territory, who took them to the wire, just losing in a close encounter 1-2. Their next game was equally tight with the ACT team going down to them 0-1. Victories of 14-0 and 10-2 in their next two games against Western and South Australia respectively saw the confidence of the young side grow as they faced the home team in the last round.

An expected clash of the titans did not eventuate and Queensland went on to defeat NSW 5-2. They easily disposed of Northern Territory 6-1 in the semis and went on to win 5-1 against ACT (who defeated NSW 1-0 in the semis) in the final, thus extending their undefeated streak to 27 games without a loss. Best on the field for the winners were Adrian Suey, Patrick Carney, Earl Sandy and Brandon Lindsey.

After four years of dominating the Boy's Open division, Queensland went down to NSW last year and the home team was not going to relinquish the title without a fight. Their first game saw a close encounter where the teams could not be separated and resulted in a 2-2 draw.

In their second round game NSW edged out the visitors 3-2 in a see-sawing game of fortunes. The final was going to be a "cracker" and the boys from both teams did not disappoint. In the end, NSW retained their title defeating Queensland 2-1 in the toughest Boy's Open games seen in many years. Neil Ward, Jason Campbell, Damien Fry and Trent McDonald

tried hard for the visitors but were outshone by the likes of Anthony McGrady, Jamie Thomas, Matthew Sewyer, Neville and Barry Donovan from NSW.

The Girls 16's was also a Queensland dominated division and they were expected to take the title again despite the NSW home advantage. An undefeated streak of 20 games gave them the confidence of winning their third consecutive title.

The clash with NSW lived up to the hype and both teams did not disappoint finally ending the game with a 0-0 draw. Easy wins in the semis saw them meet again in the final but with a much different result. Their 2-0 victory over NSW extended their undefeated streak to 27 games without a loss matching that of the Boy's team.

Angela Daley, Fleur Jenkins, Angela Brown and Barbara Dittman shone for the Queensland team, while for NSW Karina Castle, Liz Penny, Rebecca Chapman, and Julie Lapham stood out.

Western Australia tied with the Northern Territory for third place while Australian Capital Territory came fifth and South Australia were sixth.

In the Girl's Open division, Queensland was desperate to level the series over six years at three-all and not let NSW get away to a 4-2 scoreline. They knew their work would be made more difficult with a parochial home crowd against them but they never shirked from the challenge.

In the opening game against NSW, they narrowly defeated their more fancied opponents 2-1, only to have NSW come back at them in the second game to force 2-2 draw. Legend player Kerry Norman took over the coaching role from legend coach Peter Bell and in simple terms told the girls what they had to do to overcome the crowd and the NSW players.

A simple game plan of being up in their face all the time unsettled the home team and after the final whistle the sole Queensland touchdown was the difference between the two teams. Natalie Wilkinson, Amanda Baska, Sharyn Williams, Angela Zavros, Tracey Bailey and Kristy Richmond starred for Queensland while NSW's best were Renee Little, Amanda Roberts, Kelly Cotterill, Karen Hall and Loretta Donovan.

### 1992 National Schools Competition Finals Results

#### Girls 16

Queensland 2 NSW 0

#### Boys 16

Queensland 5 ACT 1

#### Girls Open

Queensland 1 NSW 0

#### Boys Open

NSW 2 Queensland 1

*"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*

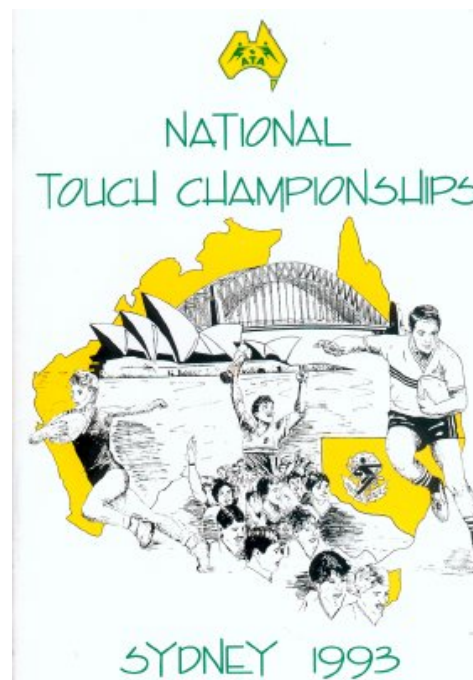
## 1993 Twelfth National Championships

*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.*



*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



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

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.

### 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 Borg (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

### Mens Open Competition Tables 1993

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	1	6		12	37
NSW	8	7	1		38	5
NT	7	1	6		10	50
Queensland	8	6	2		42	10
	30	15	15	0	102	102

### Womens Competition Tables 1993

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7		7		1	75
NSW	8	5	2	1	64	4
NT	7	2	5		6	50
Queensland	8	7		1	60	2
	30	14	14	2	131	131

### Mixed Competition Tables 1993

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
NSW	5	5			29	3
Queensland	5	2	3		10	10
Victoria	4		4		1	27
	14	7	7	0	40	40

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1993

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	2	4	1	25	16
NSW	8	5	1	2	42	7
NT	7		7		2	73
Queensland	8	6	1	1	35	8
	30	13	13	4	104	104

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1993

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	9	2	5	2	13	30
ADF	8		8		1	44
NSW	10	10			54	7
NT	9	2	5	2	15	37
Queensland	10	7	3		49	14
	46	21	21	4	132	132

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1993

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	7		6	1	11	34
NSW	8	7		1	36	9
NT	7	1	5	1	13	33
Queensland	8	5	2	1	26	10
	30	13	13	4	86	86

*Under 18's Schools bring  
New Zealand on board*

*A split from the under 16's  
Schools saw New Zealand added  
to the Opens Schools Competition*

While the six state teams in the Under 16's went to Perth this year, NSW split into the Combined High Schools and Combined Catholic Colleges to give them two teams to travel to the Gold Coast to contest the championships against a powerful Queensland State Secondary Schools system and the might of the New Zealand Schools System.

NSW were defending champions but it was going to be a difficult assignment to reproduce a win when their strength was halved. Experts felt NSW could repeat the performance but were divided as to whether it would be CHS or CCC. Queensland and New Zealand on the other hand had different ideas altogether.

Queensland set a cracking pace in the opening two games by defeating CCC 6-0 then CHS 3-0 much to the dismay of NSW supporters. They then went on to defeat New Zealand 6-2. It appeared the home side was set to avenge their defeat last year.

The second round saw them repeat their wins over their three opponents and go on to meet New Zealand in the semis disposing of them 6-1. In the other semis CHS beat CCC 4-2 to meet Queensland in the final.

Trent McDonald, Douglas Thaiday, Adrian Sneyd and Patrick Carney all starred for Queensland but players like Steve Merrill, Richard and Shaun Allan, Brent Powell and Brian Saunders were too strong and despite noisy local support, NSW CHS ran out victors 2-1.

Queensland girls followed the identical path as their boys defeating both NSW and New Zealand teams twice to go in the semis undefeated. Like the boys, they defeated New Zealand and went on to meet NSW CCC in the finals.

The semis between the two NSW teams saw a reversal of fortunes when CCC defeated their more fancied rivals CHS 7-3 in the semis.

Queensland players Lindy Smith, Deanne Wilkinson, Amy Zavros, Angela Brown, Kristy Richmond and Tanya Murphy played strongly for the home side but were outclassed by NSW CCC 3-1.

Best for NSW CCC were future icons in the Australian teams, Kristy and Amanda Judd, Melinda Gurthie and Melissa Pitfield. coached

by legend player Gabriel Maher. Others who showed impressive form were Dominique Maher and Heidi Coleman.

1993 National Schools Competition Finals Results			
<b>Girls Open</b>			
NSW CCC	3	Queensland	1
<b>Boys Open</b>			
NSW CHS	2	Queensland	1

## 1994 The Fourteenth National: 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."

"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 championship. 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.



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



#### **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)*

*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 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."*

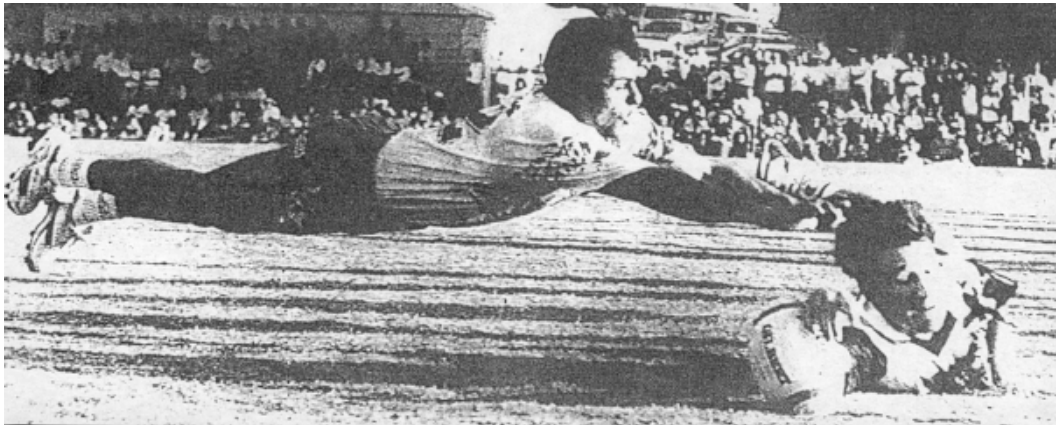
*New South Wales advanced to the grand final with a gutsy 5-2 win over the Australian Capital Territory, who led twice early on.*

*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 three-years.*



*Scott Pierce scores Queensland's equalising touchdown under pressure from NSW player, George Kokkotas during the second half of the Men's Open final.*

### 1994 National Championship Final Results

#### Men's Open

NSW 3                      Queensland 2

#### Women's Open

NSW 3                      Queensland 2

#### Mixed Open

NSW 4                      Queensland 3

#### Men's 30s

NSW 4                      Queensland 3

#### Women's 30s

Queensland 4              NSW 2

#### Men's 35s

Queensland 3              NSW 2

### Non-National Events

#### Men's 40

NSW 1                      Queensland 0

#### Men's 45s

NSW 5                      Queensland 2

#### Men's 20s

Queensland 6              NSW 0

#### Women's 20s

Queensland 3              NSW 2

### 1994 All-stars of Touch

Leesa Johnston (Qld), Steve Hughes (ACT), Ron Chilby (NSW), Mark Scott (NSW), Darren Shelley (NSW), Michael McGovern (ACT), Lynette Hardy (NSW), Swain Rovelli (Qld), Steve Golding (NSW), Trevor McPhillips (Qld), Ray Wilson (NSW), Wayne Clifford (NSW), Gai Taylor (NSW), Donna Hollingsworth (NSW)

**Coach of the Year:** Greg Newman (NSW)

**Manager of the Year:** Kathy O'Brien (Qld)

**Referee of the Year:** Niki Ward (Qld)

**Official of the Year:** Dick Fairburn (NSW) (ATA Life Member)



*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 Tirado, Jennie Williams, Silvana Corti, John Collins, Justine Smith, Dennis Shelley.

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

#### Mens Open Competition Tables 1994

##### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	9	6	3		27	17
ADF	9	5	4		25	17
NSW	9	7	2		44	12
NT	9	3	5	1	22	34
Queensland	9	8	1		58	8
South Australia	9	3	5	1	21	39
Tasmania	8		7	1	9	52
West Australia	8		5	3	11	38
	70	32	32	6	217	217



#### Womens Competition Tables 1994

##### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	6		6		6	50
NSW	8	7	1		66	7
NT	8	2	5	1	15	58
Queensland	8	6	1	1	63	8
West Australia	8	2	6		8	63
Women 20's s	12	6	4	2	46	18
	50	23	23	4	204	204

#### Mixed Open Competition Tables 1994

##### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
NSW	8	6	2		36	14
Queensland	8	7	1		51	11
South Australia	8	3	5		16	29
Victoria	8		8		7	56
	32	16	16	0	110	110

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1994

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	10	3	7		16	39
ADF	10	1	7	2	18	29
NSW	10	6	2	2	32	19
Queensland	10	7	2	1	30	19
Men 20's	12	6	5	1	39	29
	52	23	23	6	135	135

### Womens 30's Competition Tables

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	10	5	4	1	36	26
NSW	10	8	2		54	10
NT	10	1	9		16	73
Queensland	10	8	1	1	75	8
West Australia	8	1	7		3	67
	48	23	23	2	184	184

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1994

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	5		5		1	23
ADF	7	4	3		13	25
NSW	7	5	2		43	7
NT	5	1	4		5	23
Queensland	7	7			49	4
Tasmania	6	2	4		11	40
	37	19	18	0	122	122

## Schools Trans Tasman Tri Series moves to Christchurch

*In a bold move and part of an ongoing agreement between the Australian Touch Association and their New Zealand counterpart the Australian Secondary Schools 1994 competition moved across the Tasman to the South Island.*

In a bid to wrest back the title, Queensland made a dreadful start in the Boy's event losing to New Zealand 5-6 in the opening game, then in the following match getting belted 9-4 by NSW CHS. The defending title holders on the other hand breezed through their first four games scoring 28 touchdowns with only 9 against.

CHS's winning streak came to a sudden halt when they faced New Zealand for the second time and went down 1-4 after beating them 3-1 earlier. It appeared the championship was up for grabs and the better team on the day would go on to claim the title.

After three rounds the semis were Queensland versus New Zealand and CHS played CCC who was no match for their state counterparts going down 2-6. The other semi was more closely fought and with a parochial crowd it appeared the home side was headed for victory. A late touchdown saw Queensland snatch victory 4-3.

In the final Matthew Sawyer and Brent Powell played strongly for NSW but were no match for the strength of Queensland who was well served by Patrick Carney, Adrian Suey, Matty Geiger, Matthew Henderson and Michael Russo. They won 4-2.

In the Girl's Open, NSW CCC were determined to put up a good showing to defend their crown even though they were taking a much weaker team to the tournament at Christchurch.

Despite the presence of Touch superstar Louise Winchester (who would captain Australian in 3-0 test series win against NZ in 2010) and her sister Michelle, the young side failed to win a game. The title race was on between NSW CHS and Queensland as New Zealand also failed to impress and only recorded close victories against CCC.

Both sides had easy semi wins and the experienced Queensland team fancied their chances in the final against NSW CHS. Karina Castle, Rebecca Chapman and the rest tried hard but were overpowered by a more determined Queensland outfit that went on to win a close fought encounter 4-2. Best for the winners were Angela Daley, Deanne Wilkinson, Leanne Niven, Katie Curtis and Mary Steele.

### 1994 National Schools Competition Finals Results

#### Girls Open

Queensland 4 NSW CHS 3

#### Boys Open

Queensland 4 NSW CHS 2

## 1995 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.

Russell Mowles recalls "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

#### Men

Queensland 2 NSW 1

#### Women

NSW 4 Queensland 0

#### Mixed

NSW 4 Queensland 1

#### Men's 30

Queensland 5 NSW 2

#### Women's 30s

NSW 5 Queensland 4

#### Men's 35's

Queensland 3 NSW 2

#### Men's 40

Queensland 4 NSW 1

### Non-National Event

#### Men's 20

NSW 3 NSW 2

#### Women's 20

Queensland 1 NSW 0

### 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)

### Mens Open Competition Tables 1995

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	9	5	2	2	47	14
ADF	9	5	4		25	26
NSW	9	7	2		48	9
NT	9	3	4	2	24	46
Queensland	9	8		1	63	8
South Australia	9	1	6	2	16	35
Tasmania	8		7	1	7	44
West Australia	8	2	6		7	55
	70	31	31	8	237	237

### Womens Competition Tables 1995

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	9	6	3		31	20
ADF	9	3	6		14	26
NSW	9	9			65	8
NT	9	4	5		22	34
Queensland	9	7	2		60	7
South Australia	8		7	1	5	43
Tasmania	8		7	1	5	51
West Australia	9	5	4		23	36
	70	34	34	2	225	225

### Mixed Competition Tables 1995

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	5		5		4	50
NSW	5	5			28	5
Queensland	6	3	3		36	13
	16	8	8	0	68	68

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1995

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	7	2	4	1	17	20
NSW	7	4	2	1	19	8
NT	7		7		2	56
Queensland	7	5	1	1	29	7
Men 20's	10	5	2	3	38	14
	38	16	16	6	105	105

### Womens 30's Competition Tables

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
NSW	7	7			61	6
NT	7	2	5		7	54
Queensland	7	4	3		44	17
West Australia	7		7		1	73
Women 20's	10	6	4		54	17
	38	19	19	0	167	167

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1995

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7	3	4		12	19
ADF	7	3	4		12	23
NSW	7	5	2		49	7
Queensland	7	7			28	6
Tasmania	6	2	4		13	20
West Australia	6		6		3	42
	40	20	20	0	117	117

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1995

Including Finals						
	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	5	1	4		8	21
NSW	5	3	1	1	23	9
Queensland	6	5		1	24	9
Mens 45's	8	2	6		14	30
	24	11	11	2	69	69

### Last of Tri School series with New Zealand

*The third in the triangle series between New Zealand, Queensland and New South Wales was played out in Sydney between 14 and 16 September, 1995.*

The two finalists from last year would again show their dominance in both the Boy's and Girl's divisions. In the Boy's division, New Zealand proved the surprise package by defeating both NSW teams and after a 3-0 victory against CHS in the last game of the preliminary round they were quietly confident of defeating them again in the semis to reach their first final.

Strong performance by Joel Cornish, Matthew Sewyer, Matthew Orford and Chris Swan saw NSW CHS reverse the result and defeat a committed New Zealand outfit 3-0 in the semis. Queensland ensured NSW CCC remained winless in two years by defeating them 3-1 in their semi final encounter. The final was a close encounter but the skills of Paul Rogers, Dean Jackson, Matthew Henderson, Matty Geiger and Grant Archer were too good for the CHS boys allowing Queensland to retain their title 3-2.

The Girl's division mirrored that of the boys. NSW CCC again failed to win a game and Queensland and CHS met in the final. The semi for Queensland proved harder than expected as CCC took them to the wire just going down 3-4 in the final minutes. In the final the game was up for grabs until Amber Gilchrist, Katie Curtis, Nicole Conlon and Bernadette Carroll stamped their mark on the match and pushed Queensland to a 3-2 victory.

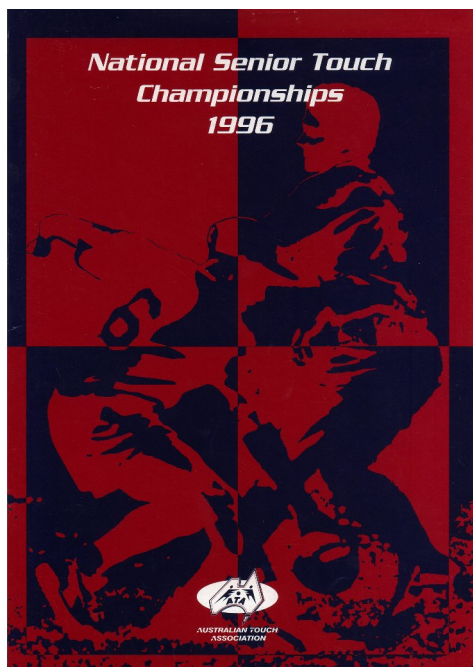
### 1995 National Schools Competition Finals Results

<b>Girls Open</b>			
Queensland	3	NSW CHS	2
<b>Boys Open</b>			
Queensland	3	NSW CHS	2

# 1996

## Rest for Open Divisions

*The National Championships take a rest for open players as only the senior divisions are contested. This will allow the ATA to reconstruct the tournament as a National Touch League.*

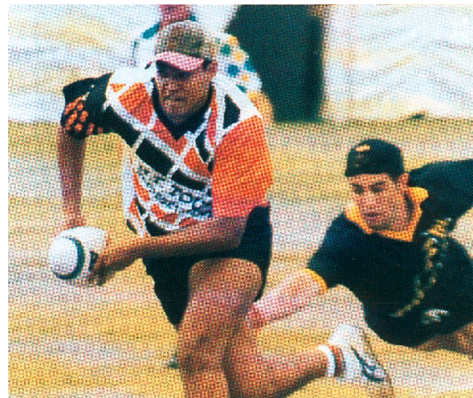


President of Touch Australia at the time, Russell Mowles, recalls:

*The 1996 Seniors Championships is the first time at a national level where the Seniors Divisions are run without the Opens or under age groups.*

*At these championships we will choose the Australian representative teams to participate in the inaugural Federation of International Touch World Masters Touch Tournament which will be held on the Gold Coast in March 1997 where Australians will defend their titles.*

*The World Masters will also see the introduction of two new divisions; the Senior Mixed division and the Womens 35 years and over division.*



*A Northern Territory player evading a Touch*

Results and scores are missing for the Seniors as a crashed computer put paid to statistical data for this event. An old paper copy of the competition table and winners exists and is reproduced below.

### 1996 National Seniors Results

#### Mens 30

NSW d Queensland

#### Womens 30

NSW drew Queensland

#### Mens 35's

Queensland d NSW

#### Mens 40's

NSW drew Queensland

### Non- National Event

#### Womens 35's

NSW d Queensland

#### Men 45's

NSW d Queensland

### 1996 All-stars of Touch

Margie Allen (Qld), Scott Notley (Qld), Judy Malcolm (NSW), Gary Simons (NSW), Rob Pratt (Qld), Kieran Gavin (NSW), Maurice Stewart (NSW), Kerry Norman (Qld), Donna O'Connor (NSW), Craig Madders (Qld), Giselle Tirado (NSW), Jody English (NSW), Neil Ward (Qld), Robert Brindell (Qld)

**Coach of the Year:** Colin Jenkinson (Qld)

**Manager of the Year:** Karama Doreset (WA)

**Referee of the Year:** Gary Mournehis (NSW)

**Official of the Year:** Dr Paul Webb (ATA Life Member)

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1996

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	6	4	2		19	17
NSW	6	3	3		17	12
NT	6	1	5		5	34
Queensland	6	6			40	3
Victoria	4		4		4	19
	28	14	14	0	85	85

### Womens 35's Competition Tables 1996

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
Act	8	2	5	1	12	46
ADF	8	1	7		8	59
NSW	8	6	1	1	63	7
Queensland	8	7		1	51	5
Victoria	6		5	1	5	54
Women 35's	12	7	5		59	27
	50	23	23	4	198	198

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1996

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	3	4	1	21	19
ADF	8		8		4	53
NSW	8	7	1		38	5
Queensland	8	5	2	1	24	10
	32	15	15	2	87	87

### Mens 40's's Competition Tables 1996

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	8	3	5		22	33
ADF	8	2	6		16	32
NSW	8	8			63	9
Queensland	8	6	2		47	13
Over 45's Men	18	5	11	2	38	99
	50	24	24	2	186	186

## Southern Cross National Open Championships

*The inaugural Southern Cross Championships were held at Thebaton Oval, Torrensville in South Australia on 8-10 June. The championships were designed by the ATA to give the emerging states and territories a tournament of their own, away from the representative powers of New South Wales and Queensland.*

The three day tournament played host to teams from Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, South Australia and the Defence Force. Nineteen teams competed in three Open age divisions that included Men's, Women's and Mixed.

While the game continued to spread across Australia, the sport still retained a traditional base in the eastern states. Collectively, New South Wales and Queensland consumed over half a million players, and the other states, while improving all the time, did not have the armory or experience to compete competitively on level terms.



*The Northern Territory side on the attack in the Men's Bronze final.*

One of the essential reasons why the National Championships were removed from the year's representative calendar was to create new tournaments where teams could compete on more equal terms.

### **1996 Southern Cross Final Results**

**Women's Plate Final:**  
Victoria 4      ADF 1

**Men's Plate Final:**  
Tasmania 3      Vic 1

**Women's Bronze Final:**  
Sth. Australia 3      ACT Sth. 2

**Men's Bronze Final:**  
Northern Territory 2      SA 1

**Mixed Final:**  
ACT Sth. 4      WA 3

**Women's Final:**  
Northern Territory 5      WA 4

**Men's Final:**  
ACT Sth. 5      ADF 1

## **1996 Heralds a new era in Schools Touch**

*The traditional State versus State, which was disbanded in 1992, to be replaced with a triangular series, now embraces permit holders.*

While Queensland, NSW and New Zealand engaged in a tri series from 1993 to 1995, plans were being made to expand the Australian Secondary Schools Championships to the show piece it is today.

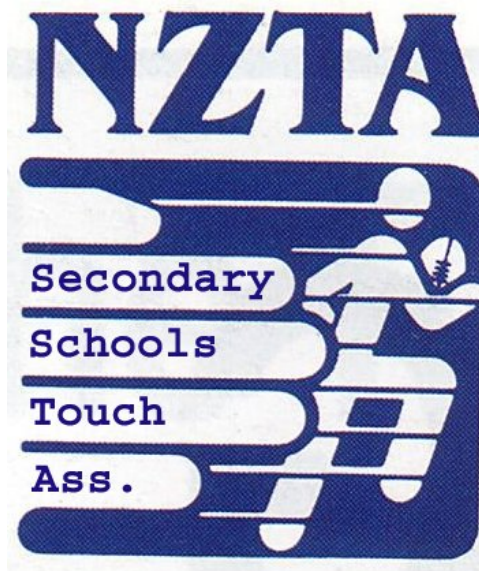
The introduction of the new format saw states like ACT, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania join with NSW, Queensland and New Zealand to compete in Coffs Harbour against permits namely: Brisbane Cobras, Northern Eagles, Sydney Metropolitan, Sydney Rebels, Sydney Scorpions, South Queensland Border Districts and Southern Suns.

The underlying premise of the championships was that the school systems had first choice at the playing strength of the competitors. This would ensure the schools were always truly represented and competitive and guarantee the longevity of Touch players from the schools system to the community.

In the Boy's Open division the teams were split into two groups, one of eight and one of seven teams. After the preliminary rounds Queensland and the Brisbane Cobras headed group A, while New Zealand and NSW CHS were one and two in Group B.

The semis saw Queensland up against CHS and in true form both teams fought to the end with the northern visitors too good, running out winners 4-3. The best player for NSW CHS was Daniel Rushworth. In the other semi, a new look New Zealand team proved too classy for Brisbane Cobras, defeating them 7-1, with David Dawson being the best player for the Cobras.

The final was going to make history with Queensland defending their title hoping for three in a row. They were up against a first time finalist in New Zealand, who finished third at their first three attempts. In a sensational display of speed and skill not seen before at this level, New Zealand ran away with the title 8-3.



Glen O'Davis tried hard and was best on field for Queensland but he and his team mates were out gunned by Quincy Ikifana (MVP), Steven Te Amo, Zane Logopati, Shuggie Mohi and the rest of the NZ team. It wasn't until six years later that New Zealand returned to play in the schools tournament.

The Southern Suns, who finished eighth, were the only team to get close to New Zealand, drawing 3-3 with them in their round game, with Matthew Marsh being the best on field for the Suns.

Like the Boys, the Girl's division was split into two groups - one of eight and one of seven teams. Again like the Boys, Queensland's Girls were aiming for their third title in a row. After the preliminary rounds, Queensland and the Northern Eagles headed group A, while NSW CHS and New Zealand were one and two in Group B.

After playing their seven preliminary games, Queensland remained undefeated and met New Zealand in the semis winning comfortably 3-0. Sarina Fiso was best on field for the losers. In

the other group NSW CHS were also undefeated and disposed of the Northern Eagles 3-1 in their semi finals bout with Emma Clifton being the Eagles' best. CHS had beaten Queensland twice in the 1994 preliminary round only to falter in the final and legend coach Karen Smith knew this would weigh on their minds. A stern pep talk to the girls saw CHS dominate in a game that changed fortunes early in the first half. However in the second half CHS ran away with the match 4-2 ending Queensland's winning streak.

Best for Queensland was Bianca Tsakissiris while NSW were best served by Joanna Nelson and ably assisted by Lisa Finch, Sarah Thomas and Joanna Nelson.

#### 1996 National Schools and Under 18's Championships Finals Results

##### Girls Open

NSW CHS	4	Queensland	2
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##### Boys Open

New Zealand	8	Queensland	3
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## 1997 A new era of National Competition commences

*The introduction of the Liptonice National Touch League in October was another milestone in the development of Touch in Australia. Touch now joined the ranks of other high profile Australian sports with the introduction of a truly national competition.*



The National Touch League was created to replace the old National Championships where the smaller states and territories found themselves totally engulfed by the more powerful states of New South Wales and Queensland. Rather than concentrate Australia's representative talent into two powerhouse teams, the NTL was designed to divide the 240,000 strong Australian market into 12 competitive sides and in the process establish a strong national club structure.

The NTL was a move away from the past and another exciting step forward in the future development of Touch in Australia," explained Australian Touch Association President, Russell Mowles.

Each of the 12 permit holders represents an equal number of registered players which makes for a much fairer, more competitive tournament. The playing talent is spread far more evenly and it gives more participants an opportunity to impress for higher representative honours.

"The NTL also provides the players, referees and selectors with an important stepping stone between local and state teams," Mowles said. The inaugural NTL was played at the superb Coffs Harbour International Sports Complex from 17 to 19 October, 1997. Most of the 12 permit holders fielded Mens, Womens and Mixed teams.

The tournament finals were broadcast on WIN, NBN and Optusvision, while NBN, the host broadcaster, ran 50 television commercials to promote the event. The Brisbane City Cobras was the strongest NTL club with all three teams reaching the finals.

The Men's Open Final was a nail biter. With the Sydney Scorpions seemingly cruising with a 3-1 lead, suddenly they had two players sin-binned, allowing the Brisbane Cobras to level the game at 3-all.

The deadlock was broken when Scorpion's star, Shane Frederiksen, beat his player with a brilliant step before diving low for the winning touchdown. Frederiksen had an outstanding game with his elusive dance work causing the Cobras problems all day, and he was a worthy Player of the Final recipient. Gavin McDonald was judged Player of the Series.

The Women's Open Final was a tale of two halves. In the first half the Sydney Mets dominated the Brisbane Cobras and were unlucky not to be more than 1-nil ahead at the break.

However, the Cobras picked up the pace in the second stanza, scoring two quick touchdowns to dominate a tiring Sydney team and take out an unexpected 2-1 victory. As always, Cobras' captain Catherine Barr led from the front and was awarded the Player of the Final. The Gold Coast's Sharyn Williams was voted Player of the Series.

The Mixed Open Final was a high scoring match between the Sydney Rebels and the Brisbane Cobras. The teams went touchdown for touchdown until the 5-5 deadlock was broken by two quick touchdowns by the Rebel's playmaker Darren Shelley. The Rebels then managed to hold out a fast finishing Cobras side to take out a solid 7-5 win.

Player of the Final went to the Rebels' Darren Shelley, and Player of the Series went to Dione Williams from the Brisbane City Cobras. "As a marketing tool the NTL is vital to the long-term wellbeing of the sport," explained Bill Ker, ATA Chief Executive Officer. "A strong national club structure provides the players with a stronger regional identity and is seen as fundamental to the grassroots development of the sport," he said.

"These 12 permit holders will directly influence the course of grass roots development. While it's still early days, I think you'll see the NTL grow increasingly important in years to come. The 20s have already been included, and the Masters divisions are also looking to come on board," Ker said.



### 1997 Liptonice National Touch League Results

#### Men's Open

Scorpions 4      Cobras 3

#### Women's Open

Cobras 2      Mets 1

#### Mixed Open

Rebels 3      Cobras 5

### National Touch League 1997

#### Opens Overall Placing

Teams	Men	Wm	Mx	#
Brisbane Cobras	11	12	10	33
Gold Coast Sharks	10	10	9	29
Sydney Mets	10	11	7	28
Sydney Scorpions	12	4	9	25
Sydney Rebels	3	10	11	24
NQ Cyclones	6	8	3	17
Hunter Hornets	4	7	4	15
Sunwest R'backs	7	5	2	14
Crusaders	8	3	1	12
Barbarians	5	6	-	11
Northern Eagles	2	1	6	9
Southern Suns	1	2	5	8

*National seniors last year before start of their NTL*

*The senior teams from each state will meet for the last time in Coffs Harbour under the State versus State from before moving to a National League next year.*

The dwindling number of State teams able to compete at the Nationals each year forces the Australian Touch Association to rationalise the level of the competition and spread the cost over a greater number of players.

1997 saw the introduction of a National league for Open teams where each division had twelve teams including a composite Barbarian and Crusaders teams representing the states other than NSW and Queensland.

Its success was being duplicated in 1998 for Senior players. Again results have been lost but winners and competitions tables are available from hard copy.

### Mens 30's Competition Tables 1997

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ACT	7		6	1	9	35
ADF	8	3	4	1	15	24
NSW	8	6	1	1	41	14
Queensland	7	4	2	1	22	14
	30	13	13	4	87	87

### Womens 30's Competition Tables

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	5		5		1	63
NSW	5	4	1		34	4
Queensland	6	4	2		39	7
	16	8	8	0	74	74

### 1997 National Seniors Results

#### Mens 30

Aust Defence  
Forces d NSW

#### Womens 30

NSW d Queensland

#### Mens 35's

NSW d Queensland

#### Mens 40's

Queensland d NSW

### Mens 35's Competition Tables 1997

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	5	2	3		17	20
NSW	6	6			42	5
Queensland	6	4	2		19	14
Tasmania	4		4		4	23
West Australia	5	1	4		5	25
	26	13	13	0	87	87

### Mens 40's Competition Tables 1997

#### Including Finals

	P	W	L	D	F	A
ADF	5		5		6	39
NSW	6	4	2		27	12
Queensland	5	4	1		25	7
	16	8	8	0	58	58



Defence's, Chris Bradley, looks for support as he breaks into the clear.

## ***1997 Second Year of new format for Schools and under 18's***

***From 18 to 20 September twenty seven (27) Boys and Girls teams gathered again at Coffs Harbour for the National Titles***

With New Zealand not being present after their devastating performance in the Boy's division last year, the title was there to be won by any of the twelve Boy's teams. In the two groups both Queensland and the NSW Northern Eagles went through their preliminary rounds undefeated. They met NSW CHS and South Queensland Border Districts respectively in the semis.

The clash of old rivals in the Queensland CHS game saw the result see-saw throughout the match with CHS eventually winning a very close encounter 4-3. The best for Queensland was Charles Seeto. In the other semi, the Eagles proved too strong for SQBD running out winners 3-2. The best for Border Districts was Jade Barnes.

For the first time in 10 years (since Schools Touch was played on the national scene) the Queensland Boys were not in the final. CHS and the Eagles held the crowd spellbound with the speed and skill displayed by the youngsters. CHS finally prevailed to win 3-1.

Best for the Eagles was Chris Swan while Daniel Rushworth was best for the second year in a row for CHS. He was ably assisted by Derek Santalucia (who went on to represent Italy in the 1999 World Cup), Joel Campbell and Toby Ryston-Pratt (a future Men's Open player for the Eagles). Mark McLinden starred for the ACT team in their preliminary round defeat of NSW CHS winning 2-0 and stopping them from going through undefeated.

The Girl's division saw two groups of seven teams fight out for the top two placings in each group. Group A saw NSW CHS and Northern Eagles fill the top two places while in Group B Queensland and NSW CCC came in one and two. Both semis were one sided affairs with Queensland disposing of the Eagles 9-2 despite Shaney Ramand starring for the vanquished side. Despite a strong effort by Louise Winchester and her team mates, they failed to make any impression on the strong CHS team who went on to defeat CCC 7-1.

The final was a repeat of the last three years finals with NSW hoping to square the ledger 2-2. However a strong performance by CHS's Cara Webb failed to get them over the line going down to Queensland 3-2 in extra time. The best for the winners was Christie McTaggart ably supported by Kelly Woods, Karlana Nelson, Kelli Donnelly, Bianca Tsakissiris and Renee Henderson.

### **1997 National Schools and Under 18's Championships Finals Results**

#### **Girls Open**

Queensland	3	NSW CHS	2
(Drop Off)			

#### **Boys Open**

NSW CHS	3	Northern Eagles	1
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## ***1998 Sydney teams sweep the National Touch League***

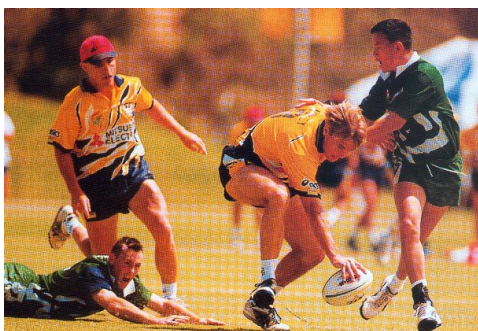
***The tournament was staged in Coffs Harbour from 10- 17 October. It separated Australia's vast pool of representative talent into 12 regional sides.***

The 1998 National Touch League carried forward from last year's initial success with another outstanding tournament. Still in its infancy the revolutionary concept received widespread support from the Touch community and beyond and continued to gain momentum.



The event was expanded to include a number of senior divisions, including the Men's 030s, 035s, 040s, 045s and Women's 030s and 035s. In all, the six-day tournament played host to 116 teams and over 2,500 players and officials.

Tournament Director, Jon Pratt, commented on the improvement in the standard of play. "It's good to see the level of improvement from one year to the next. The NTL is giving many teams the competition that they wouldn't ordinarily participate in. They get to play against the big boys, and its doing wonders for their experience and confidence," Pratt explained.

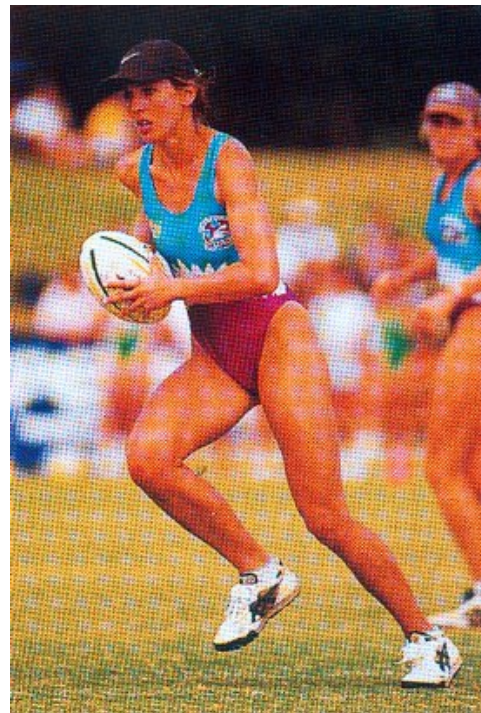


*A vastly improved Crusaders side pushed the eventual winners, the Sydney Scorpions, to the limit in a narrow pool loss.*

"I think that the NTL is a great concept for the teams, and it'll only get stronger. There's just a wonderful feeling amongst the players who really seem to enjoy the standard of competition," he said.

Indeed, the local Coffs Harbour Council had been similarly impressed with the tournament and its economic benefits, and they pitched for a long-term association.

"It's very encouraging to see the level of support we are receiving from the local business and tourism sectors," contended Bill Ker, Chief Executive Officer of the ATA. "Coffs Harbour recognises the benefits that this tournament brings to the local community."



*Catch me if you can: Fiona Clarke (nee Murray) from the Sharks*

Much in the same way that the NSW State Cup had found a home in Port Macquarie, the NTL had found a home in Coffs Harbour. With the spectacular beaches, hotels, scenery and superb playing facilities, Coffs Harbour has plenty to offer.

"It's a great location and a really good tournament for the players," commented Sydney Scorpions player, Mark Boland. "The players have definitely accepted the concept and I think it'll continue to grow. I really enjoy playing here."

Apart from NBN, WIN and Optus coverage, this year's NTL Finals were also broadcast nationally on the ABC, which was another huge coup for the tournament and the sport of Touch. An

interesting NTL trend was the large number of Queensland versus NSW permit holders' final match-ups, and this was a critical factor in bringing the best out of the players.

### **Mixed Finals**

The Sydney Scorpions always had the measure of the Gold Coast Sharks in the Mixed final, despite a one-point win. The Scorpions carried on from their 4-2 half time lead to win 6-5 in an entertaining, high scoring game.

Scorpion's player Dean Murphy had an excellent game and was always a handful, scoring two touchdowns in his Most Valuable Player performance.

### **Women's Final**

The Gold Coast Sharks came into the Women's Final unbeaten after six games and were confident of a win. On the other hand, the Sydney Mets lost one game to the Sydney Rebels and had a nerve-racking one-point win over last year's winners, the Brisbane Cobras in the semi final.

After a tentative start, before a 3,000 strong crowd, the Mets took a solid 2-1 lead to the break after touchdowns to Sloane Whiteman and Nadina Bambury. A quick dump and pass early in the second half by Giselle Tirado saw the Mets stretch the lead to 3-1, which was enough to get them home.

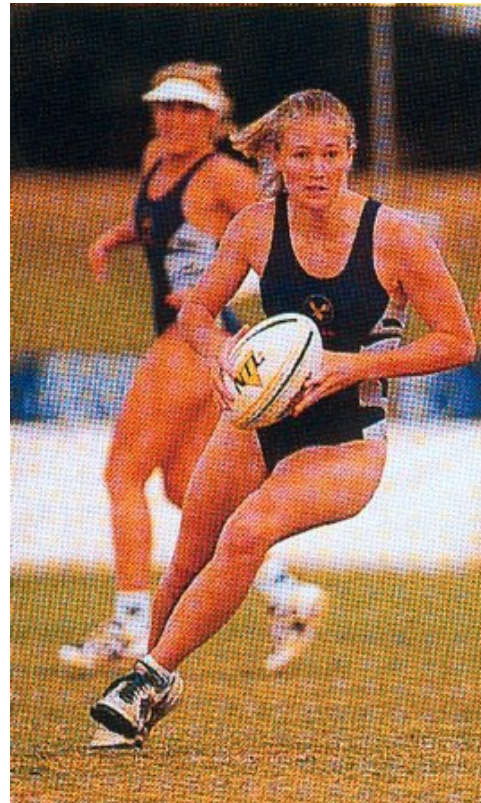


*Last year's runners-up, the Sydney Mets, go one better with a strong win over the Gold Coast Sharks to take the Women's Open title.*

### **Men's Final**

The Men's final featured another NSW versus Queensland clash, with the Sydney Scorpions up against the Sunwest Razorbacks. In one of the best games of the tournament the Scorpions just got up in the semi final, beating the Brisbane Cobras 4-3 in a classic encounter.

The Razorbacks came into the final with some indifferent form. After an 11-4 loss to the Cobras in the last round, few gave them a chance of taking the title.



*NSW representative, Melissa Pifield, was always dangerous in attack.*

However, they returned to form with a solid 8-4 win over a much-improved Crusaders side in the semi-final. Both teams started the final at full throttle. Six-a-side at this level was played at an incredible pace and the transitions from the bench were fast and furious.

The Scorpions soon began to dominate territory with better ball control and movement. It was not long before Robert Smith scored after a clever switch with Jason Zabiello close to the line.

It was Jason Zabiello again who set up the second touchdown after a brilliant step to put Adam Fahim over in the corner taking the score to 2-0. It was only a signature score by Scott Notley late in the half that kept the Razorbacks in the game. While the Razorbacks were still smarting over what looked to be a very dubious touchdown, the Scorpions were in again with Adam Lollback advancing the score to 3-1 just minutes before the break.

Six minutes into the second half the Razorbacks' Neil Ward took a brilliant reflex intercept against the run of play to narrow the score to 3-2. Then it was another piece of individual brilliance by Gavin McDonald who dummied his way over to level the score at three touchdowns each. Suddenly, the Razorbacks were back in the game with momentum and territory swinging their way. The teams slugged it out to full time, finishing all square at three-a-piece. The teams immediately returned with five players.



*Sydney Scorpions celebrate back-to-back Men's Open NTL titles.*

The Scorpions were favoured by a mountain of possession and the Razorbacks were forced to desperately defend their line. Finally, it was down to a four-on-four situation when the veteran, Scott Notley, was matched up with the fresh legs of Shane Frederiksen.

Frederiksen seized the opportunity, getting on Notley's outside before throwing a wide ball to winger, Glen Fitzgerald, who dived for the corner to score. In the end it was sheer weight of possession that got the Scorpions home. The Scorpions successfully defended their title, with an exhausted yet delighted Mark Boland collecting the Most Valuable Player award.

### 1998 NTL Results

#### Men's Open

Scorpions 4      Razorbacks 3

#### Women's Open

Mets 3      Sharks 1

#### Mixed Open

Scorpions 6      Sharks 5

## National Touch League 1998

### Opens Overall Placing

Teams	Men	Wm	Mx	#
Sydney Scorpions	15	8	13	36
Gold Coast Sharks	7	12	10	29
Brisbane Cobras	9	10	8	27
Sydney Mets	8	15	4	27
Sydney Rebels	5	9	7	21
Sunwest Razorbacks	12	7	1	20
NQ Tropical Cyclones	6	6	6	18
Crusaders	10	4	3	17
Hunter Hornets	4	5	-	9
Northern Eagles	3	1	5	9
Southern Suns	1	3	2	6
Barbarians	2	2	-	4

## Seniors Permits invited to join Open Titles at the NTL

*From 10 to 13 October, Senior Teams take the field to battle for supremacy in inaugural NTL for aged Touch athletes.*

The NTL permit holders were invited to send senior teams to Coffs Harbour to compliment the elite divisions' championships. Sixty over aged teams turned up to showpiece the aged athletes of Touch in Australia.

Men's divisions contested were the Thirties, Thirty Five's, Forty's and Forty Five's, while in the Women's there were the Thirties, and Thirty Fives. Included in the competition were state teams (Mens 30's) from South Australia and Northern Territory. In addition, Shayne Hayne (NRL leading Referee of the late nineties) represented the Hunter Western Hornets.

### Men's 30's is the showpiece of the Titles

With a plethora of talented ex-Open players the 30 year's division was not going to be a title any team would win easily. The two contenders from Queensland were the Brisbane Cobras and Gold Coast Sharks while from NSW the Sydney Mets and Sydney Scorpions were the favourites to win for the southern State.

Split into two pools of six teams, the Sharks and Scorpions went through the preliminary rounds undefeated. The semis saw the Sharks dispose of the Mets 4-1 while the Cobras, who finished second to the Sharks in their group due to a 3-5 loss to them in the rounds, thrashed the Sydney Scorpions 5-1.

Best for the Mets were Laurie Horder, Peter Mueller, Len Ryan and Tony Mazloum, while for the Scorpions Sam Ayoub, Mark Nicholls, Brendon McDonald and Michael Cheung served them well.

The final was an all Queensland affair but the star studded Sharks led by Patrick Grehan (Player of the Series) and Bobby Brindell (Player of the Final) were too good for the Cobras, winning 4-2. The Sharks were also well served by Paul Dart, Steve Soldateko, Adrian Harrington and Peter Sheppard while best for the Cobras were Daryl Francey, Mitch Bonaventura, Ashley Heiniger and Darren O'Riley.

### **Mens 35's Semis Series**

The Mens 35's saw ten teams split into two pools with the inclusion of the Crusaders franchise which represented the Australian Capital Territory, Australian Defence Forces, Victoria and Tasmanian Touch Associations.

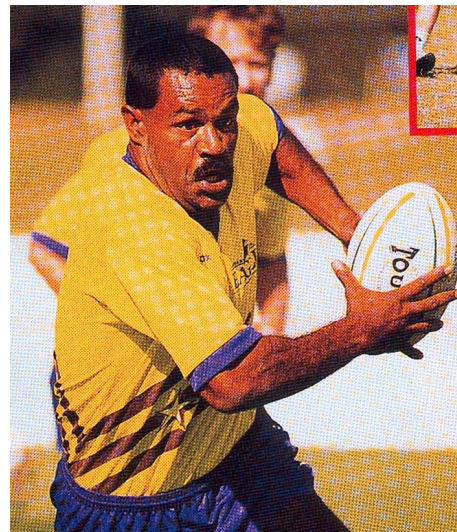


*Sharks Player Neil Paton (right) along with the crew of Prudential won the World 18 foot Skiff titles in 1989.  
Photograph by courtesy of the Daily Telegraph*

Both the Crusaders and Hornets went through their pool games undefeated and met Scorpions and Sharks respectively in the semis. In a game worthy of being the final, the Scorpions took the Crusaders to the wire before going down to them 4-5 in the dying stages.

Best for the Scorpions were Tim Kitchingham, Jeff Cheung, Bruce Ager and Geoff Dunstan. In the other semi the Sharks put on a brave showing going down 1-2 to the Hunter Hornets. They were best served by Phil Evans, Neil Paton, Geoff Bunt, Mark Bonner and Robert Young.

The Crusaders and Hornets boasted players who had State representative experience under their belt so the final was not going to be a love affair. The more experience players in the Crusaders prevailed, defeating the Hornets 3-1. Best for the runners up were Dean McManus, Peter Cumberland, Mark Renshaw and Terry Harvey while the Crusaders best were Garry Lawless, Steve Hughes, Chris Bradley, John Samin and Danny Goodwin.



*Showcasing their wares: Senior players were invited to participate in the NTL for the first time and players enjoyed the opportunity to display their skills*

### **Mens 40's Semis Series**

Again two groups of six teams saw the Southern Suns and Sunwest Razorbacks go through the pool games without a loss. The Northern Territory and Crusaders were represented but failed to make the semis.

The Suns came up against the strong Sydney Mets team but disposed of them 4-2 in their semis clash. Best for the Mets were Jack Liston, Dieter Major, Robert Behnke and Lindsay Delpech. The other semi saw a star studded Razorbacks, side best served by Ray Standish, Trevor McPhillips, Don Baartz and Kevin Feldman, defeat the Northern Eagles 6-1.

The final was not a one sided encounter despite the score line of 4-1 to the Suns as the result was in doubt until the last quarter of the game when the Suns skipped away. Best on field for them were Ron Wall, Ron Chilby, Gary Newman, Mick McCall, Rod Byre and Kevin Hastings.

### **Mens 45's Semis Series**

The 45's saw nine teams play each other once in a round robin series before the top four sides contested the semis. The North Queensland Cyclones, Brisbane Cobras, Hunter Western Hornets and Northern Eagles filled the top four places respectively.

After their 2-2 draw in the round games, the contest between the Eagles and Cyclones was seen to be the match to watch. However the Eagles produced a magnificent performance to defeat the Cyclones 4-1. Best for the Cyclones were Robert Jakeman, Max Bryant, Alan Camp and Charles Simpson.

The other semi saw Hornets run over the Cobras 6-1. Best for the Cobras were Trevor Kennett, Graham Gibson and Arthur Higgs. The final was expected to be a close encounter and both teams did not disappoint. The Eagles however proved just too strong in the end winning a close fought game 2-1.

The Hornets were best served by Dave Knight, Mick Anastas, Phil Flowers, Kim Miller and Michael Gallagher while best for the victors were Peter Vincent, Ian Wilson, Garry Chesher, Terry Wright and Peter Richards.

### **Womens 30's Semis Series**

Eight teams played each other once before the top four contenders were finalised. The Scorpions went through undefeated while the Sharks and Cyclones lost only one game each and the Razorbacks lost two.

Having defeated the Razorbacks in the rounds 3-1, the Scorpions felt they would not be troubled by them in the semis. However no one told the Razorbacks and they came out to avenge their round defeat 3-1 and sent the Scorpions home without the title they were expecting. Best for the losers were Margy Boland, Tracy Simpson, Lisa Wandl, Sharyn Martin and Silvanna Corti.

The other semi saw the Sharks and the Cyclones fight hard to the final whistle where the Sharks prevailed 2-1. Best for the Cyclones were Terri

Kronk, Ellen Fitzgerald, Gina Baker and Sue Ginns. The final saw two star studded sides battle out for supremacy in the best of the Senior Women's divisions. The Sunwest Razorbacks prevailed 2-0 over the Gold Coast Sharks to take the inaugural title.

The Sharks were best served by Haylene Grogan, Kerry Robinson, Therese Gage, Sue Robba and super star Kerry Norman, while the winners were best served by Pam McPherson, Kim Baker, Sue Walsh, Kerri Francy, Kerry Strasser and Andrea Roth.

### **Womens 35's Semis Series**

Nine teams competed in the Womens 25's and after eight rounds the semi finalists were decided. The Sydney Scorpions were undefeated while the Northern Eagles, Sunwest Razorbacks and North Queensland Tropical Cyclones made up the balance of the play off teams.



*Mercurial Womens Senior player Judy Malcolm from the Sydney Scorpions*

A 4-4 draw with the Cyclones in their round game saw the Scorpions approach their semis encounter with caution. A hard fought game saw the Scorpions eventually win 2-0. The Cyclones were ably served by Kym Grundy, Val Cameron, Sue Salter and Di Rossi.

The Eagles took no quarter from their encounter with the Razorbacks and repeated their round defeat, running out winners 3-0. Best for the Razorbacks were Julie Lobwein, Karen Vorpapel and Chris Poppi. Facing the Eagles in the finals were the Scorpions who beat them 3-1 in the preliminary rounds.

The final was a fast pace for these aged athletes with both sides willing to throw the ball around and use their speed out wide. The difference between the two sides was the scoop game of Judy Malcolm, who destroyed the Eagles defence and gave the Scorpions a 3-0 victory to capture the inaugural Over 35's Womens Title.

Best for the Eagles were Audrey Zonbellie, Louise McCourt, Cate Simms, Denise Hart and Therese Spears while the Scorpions were best served by Judy Malcolm, Jann Rose, Tracey Conry, Gabby Whelan and Carol Forlonge.

#### 1998 NTL Senior Results

##### Men's 30

Sharks 4 Cobras 2

##### Women's 30

Razorbacks 2 Sharks 0

##### Men's 35

Crusaders 3 Hornets 1

##### Women's 35

Scorpions 3 Eagles 0

##### Men's 40s

Suns 4 Razorbacks 1

##### Men's 45s

Eagles 2 Hornets 1

## England sends teams to Youth Championship with permits showcasing

## the stars of tomorrow

*The under 20 Years Men and Women join with the Open's Divisions to display their talents and impress Open coaches for a future call up into the adult ranks.*

The under 20 year's Men and Women players representing their permits gathered at Coffs Harbour to play alongside their heroes and the legends of Touch. They were joined by youth teams representing England. Twelve Men's 20's teams were split into two pools with the Cobras, Cyclones and Sharks going through preliminary rounds undefeated.

The fourth team to make the semis was the Southern Suns. The Cobras played hard to narrowly defeat the Sharks 4-3 while the Cyclones spent no time in demolishing the Suns 7-3. Best for the Sharks were Nathan Halford, Jeb Hipperson and Terence Kong and best for the Suns were Shane Turton and Lucky Phrachanh.

The final was a gripping encounter with the Cobras running out winners 3-2 over the Cyclones. Best for Cyclones was Francis Cathern and Andrew Pratt while for the Cobras, they were best served by Brent Madders, Michael Rogers, Peter Stoddart, Steven Swan and Luke Parker.

In the Women's 20 division, the Sharks and Mets topped their pools going through undefeated. They were joined in the semis by the Cyclones and Cobras. The Mets defeated the Cyclones 2-0 in a tight struggle but the Sharks versus Cobras game see-sawed until finally the Sharks prevailed 4-3.

Best for the Cyclones were Bernadette Carroll, Toni Hodges and Chantae Zunker and for the Cobras Shan Corcoran and Daina Hobbins stood out. The final saw the Sharks overwhelm the Mets 4-2. For the losing team Meagan Mannix, Stephanie Sorrensen, Maribel Ingelmo and Kate Fittsimmons played well while for the victors Zara Houston, Jasmine Silk, Cristie McTaggart, Shaye Macleod and Rebecca Curtis stood out.

### 1998 NTL Youth Results

#### Men's 20

Cobras 3 Cyclones 2

#### Women's 20

Sharks 4 Mets 2

With the Scorpions winning the Open's Section of the NTL (two wins and a fifth) and the Sharks and Razorbacks sharing the points in the seniors it was up to the youth points count to see who the overall winner of the NTL was.



### 1998 Overall Points Table

1	Gold Coast Sharks	93
2	Brisbane Cobras	82
2	Sydney Scorpions	82
4	Nth Qld Tropical Cyclones	73
4	Sydney Metropolitan	73
6	Sunwest Razorbacks	72
7	Northern Eagles	58
8	Southern Suns	52
9	Hunter Western Hornets	51
10	Crusaders	49
11	Sydney Rebels	38
12	Northern Territory	5
13	Barbarians	4
14	England	2
15	South Australia	1

## Australian Under 18 Championships

*The Australian Under 18 Touch Championships again proved to be the breeding ground for national stars in the various football codes, as well as a vital experience for players of both sexes as future elite Touch players.*

The Australian Under-18 Championships were held at Coffs Harbour in September 1998. Queensland showed their strength in the junior ranks with both their Boys and Girls teams completing the tournament undefeated after seven rounds of competition.



*Marc Laird from NSW's Southern Suns, one of the many talented young guns who made their mark on the tournament.*

The NSW Combined High School Boys team won six of their round games, only drawing with the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges team. Brett Panozza was CHS's best throughout the tournament.

The best performed non-school based team was the Southern Suns Boys, led by Marc Laird, who won the Bronze play-off against the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges, with Noel McClean being CCC's best

Jarod Tump from the Queensland Boy's team had an outstanding tournament and was rewarded with the Player of the Series, while Nathan Russo was named Player of the Final. Six of the 14 players named in the Australian Under-18 National Squad were from the Queensland Team.

Queensland and NSW CHS again went through undefeated in their groups. The semis saw CHS defeat CCC in a close encounter 6-5 with Louise Winchester again being CCC's best. Queensland came up against Sydney Mets but easily defeated them 9-1, despite a strong performance from Mets' Sara Hamilton.

The final was a repeat of last year and would be repeated again every year until 2009. Despite a strong game from Stacey Lapham, NSW CHS was overrun by a Renee Henderson inspired Queensland team winning 4-2.

Six Queensland girls were also included in the Australian Under-18 Girls National Squad. Queensland's Renee Henderson was a clear choice as the Player of the Series, while NSW Combined High School player, Belinda Dawney, received the Player of the Final award.

### 1998 Australian Under-18 Championship Results

#### Girl's Bronze

NSWCCC 5      Mets 4

#### Girl's Grand Final

QSST 4      NSWCHS 2

#### Boy's Bronze

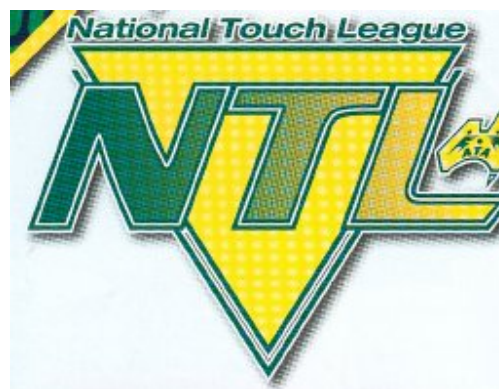
Southern Suns 3      NSWCCC 2

#### Boy's Grand Final

QSST 6      NSWCHS 1

## 1999 National Touch League

*Scorpions Sting Again! Three in row for the Sydneysiders. The 1999 NTL was held from 14 to 20 March. The ATA moved the competition from late in the year to the first major tournament on the Touch calendar.*



The timing of the 1999 NTL resulted in many of the World Cup stars making themselves unavailable with the Sunwest Razorbacks and North Queensland Cyclones pulling out all together. Despite this the tournament once again proved successful.

The mighty Sydney Scorpions once again dominated the Open's divisions with their Mens and Mixed Opens taking their respective titles. The Brisbane City Cobras were winners in the Women's. Nick Walshaw from the Coffs Harbour Advocate reported on the event:

*It seems the only thing more successful than the Sydney Scorpions Men's Touch side is the game they represent. The Scorpions won their third consecutive National Touch League Men's Open title at Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium on Saturday. Despite being without their national players, who opted to miss the tournament and prepare for next month's World Cup in Sydney, the young Scorpions again dominated the competition and finished with a 3-2 victory over the Brisbane City Cobras in the final.*

*The Men's Open match was just one of several exciting games played on the final day of the competition, now regarded as the best in the world. Australian Touch Association marketing director, Richard Scotts, said the outstanding performances of the players at the Coffs Harbour tournament represented the strength and growth of Australian Touch.*

*"Touch as a spin-off sport played by rugby league players, but it has become so big it's got its own rules, balls and uniforms ... Touch is its own entity," Scotts said. The sport has grown so rapidly over the past decade that the association now has 240,000 registered players, 10 full-time development officers, paid referees and a million dollar sponsorship in Liptonice. The sport has also discarded its 'men only' tag with women making up 55 per cent of the junior ranks.*



*Maree Curran from the Crusaders puts on the big step.*

*"Touch is undermining netball at the moment it's so popular," Scotts said. "It's unbelievable when you consider it was a male sport only 15 years ago. And now Touch is making its mark on the global scene [with next month's World Cup in Sydney]."*

*"Touch is a homegrown sport that is now played in 60 countries around the world," Scotts said. "Not many games designed purely by*

*Australians have gone on to become a worldwide sport."*

### **Top Touch Senior Players Hit Town at Coffs Harbour.**

*The Coffs Harbour Advocate reported:*

*Australia's best senior Touch footballers will have barely finished partying this morning when play gets underway in the nation's premier Touch competition. More than 700 of Australia's elite Touch players will compete in the National Touch League Open, Under-20s and Mixed competitions beginning today at the Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium.*

*And if the action is anything like yesterday's fast-paced Australian Senior Championships finals, players and spectators are in for an exciting four days of Touch. Tournament Director, Jon Pratt, said the National Touch League was not only Australia's premier Touch event, but the best of its kind in the world.*

*"It is without doubt the world's number one competition for Touch players...there is no equal," Pratt said. "That's why countries like England come here, just for the experience of the competition in the world's number one tournament."*

*Players have got to go through an extensive qualifying process just to get to this tournament. "For instance, the Southern Suns sides have two tournaments before they select a side to come here."*



*Michelle Garnett from the Scorpions*