

PHILIPPINE AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL.

Round 1, May 8th, 2004 Manila Polo Club

At last, the long awaited Aussie Rules comp got under way at the Manila Polo Club last Saturday. It was an amazing turn out as we ended up with 27 players, so we decided to have 13 a side with 10 players on the field and 3 much needed interchange players with 4 x 10 minute quarters. The umpiring duties were rotated each quarter with Michael Templeton, Craig Kingston, Matt Matthews and Paul Griffiths doing a great job umpiring their respective quarters. We also had 20 or so spectators eagerly watching the highly anticipated birth of Aussie Rules in the Philippines. The teams were split into the NON VICS and VICS and were pretty evenly matched in terms of age, size, fitness and ability.

NON – VICS

Paul Griffiths (C)
Peter Stone
Craig Kingston
David Carmen
Josh Bullock
Aaron Holbrook
Alan Morrell
Les Patten
Gary Powell
Richie Amurao
George Abbas
Ross Schirmer
Mark Snowden
James Young

VICS (well predominantly anyway)

Derek Ackary (C)
Steve Warren
Manoli Loukas
Ben Murphy
Scott Maggs
Peter Dolinsky
Peter Lawrence
Andrew Phillips
Matt Matthews
Gabe Matthews
Ben Sayer
Michael Templeton
Dean McIntyre

Boundary Umpires

Warren Carmen, Randell Carmen

Time Keeper, Scorer & Photographer

Lawrie Martin

Professional Heckler

Gavin Read

Substitute Heckler

Kevin Lewis

Due to a fantastic effort on behalf of Randell who organized portable goal and behind posts with only 3 days notice, we were able to have goal and behind posts at either end of the field which created the true atmosphere of an Aussie Rules game. However, we were lacking a few beaten up Holden utes parked around the boundary, but we are working on this for future games. The VICS won the toss and decided to kick to the wind assisted Pavilion end.

The VICS didn't waste any time coming out of the blocks early and slamming on 5 straight goals in the first quarter, thanks mostly to the hustling and bustling of Manoli across half forward. Steve's fluky kick off the shin for a goal saw the VICS take a handy 10 point lead into a heavily panting quarter time huddle.

The second quarter was more evenly contested but it was the inaccurate kicking by the NON VICS that saw the VICS take a handy 15 point lead going into the very much needed half time break with everyone scrambling to the esky gasping for breath.

The NON VICS had an explosive start to the third quarter as George the self-proclaimed opportunist snapped two excellent goals within two minutes as the NON VICS slammed on three unanswered goals. Rossco also started to dominate in the ruck, however instinct took over at one point as he dished out a fantastic spiralling rugby pass that any Wallaby player would have been proud to receive. It was brought to Rossco's attention that this was actually an illegal disposal in this code of the game, no matter how good it looked. Even though we were meant to playing the NON CONTACT version of the game, instinct did take over on several occasions during the game with one of the third quarter highlights being Kingo's sensational tackle on Manoli which left the burly forward wheezing heavily and gasping for breath. The VICS began to arrest the onslaught late in the third quarter amongst all the excitement and confusion, kicking two unanswered goals. Three quarter time saw the VICS up by only 2 points setting up a thrilling final quarter.

With the NON VICS only two points down at three quarter time, the excitement leading up to the final quarter was overwhelming. However, the excitement quickly turned to fatigue as the players took full advantage of the interchange

bench. At one stage there was actually more players on the bench than on the field! Peter Dolinsky's instinct also took over during this quarter as he laid a fantastic tackle on Kingo as Kingo was baulking and weaving his way out of centre looking for an option at full forward. The superior unfitnes of the NON VICS was exposed in the end as the VICS held on to kick three goals to two in the final term ensuring an enthralling nine point victory. Final scores VICS 5.0 7.1 9.2 12.3 **(75)** NON VICS 3.2 4.4 8.6 10.6 **(66)**

SPECIAL MENTIONS.

Peter Lawrence, inspired by the Demons current resurgence in the real league, put in a consistent performance deep in defence taking some strong grabs and preventing the NON VICS from kicking an extra two or three goals.

The young on ballers, in Gabe, Jason, Josh and David, put in fantastic performances stringing together four quarters of hard running skilful football, forcing a large majority of the players to confront the reality of how unfit they were.

Richie our first Filipino player, showed a load of guts and determination in his very first Aussie Rules contest. His agility and fitness provided a good foil across half back for the NON VICS.

Aaron Holbrook played a very consistent game for the NON VICS, rucking around the ground and also providing a good marking target at full forward. Steve Warren also provided a good target up forward for the VICS, arguably not because of his size but strong grabs, kicking 3 goals.

Griffo's Wirrpunda style long bombs from the centre would have been more of a highlight if only they had more direction.

Ben Sayer put in a great effort for the VICS as he tirelessly rucked for the whole day unchanged forming the backbone of the VICS game plan. Rossco put the salary cap issues behind him and was also a standout for the NON VICS playing in the ruck for the majority of the game.

All in all every player contributed in some way making it a good honest and enjoyable contest that was played in great spirit. It worked out to be a very successful day with no injuries except to the players pride.

Now that we seem to have enough players to be able to field at least two teams of eight players on a weekly basis, we need to come up with some names for the two domestic teams and welcome any suggestions and input from all involved. Names we have come up with so far are the Dingos, Kookaburras, Kangaroos, Goannas, Cockatoos and Frill Necked Lizards. We also need to have input on guernsey designs for the domestic teams although this may be influenced by

the names we finally choose. It has been suggested the guernseys to be an original design as opposed to using an existing AFL team's guernsey.

When it comes to playing at an international level, the general consensus so far is that most of the players will be happy to be known as the PHILIPPINE EAGLES. Gazza Powell has created a jpeg for a guernsey incorporating the Philippine flag. If anyone would like to see it, just email me and I will email it to you. There is already strong interest from a Tasmanian Team and the Hong Kong Dragons to tour here sometime this year.

The Polo Club is booked for our use for the remaining Saturdays in May, from 4 to 6pm. We also seem fairly certain that we can book the field for June and July. This will be confirmed by the end of this month. We will also be finalizing a payment scheme within the next couple of weeks. At this stage the cost will be P350 per player with junior players under the age of 18 free of charge. This will enable us to cover the cost of the field, and also provide water and Gatorade during our breaks. When everyone arrives this week, can they please register and pay before playing with either myself or Peter Stone. Food and beverage purchased after the game will be available at members prices through a cash bar which will be set up for us each week. Please tell your mates about the competition and invite them to either participate as a player, umpire, spectator or join Gavin's professional hecklers squad (PHS). Could those playing this week please confirm this with me by lunchtime Thursday so that I can make sure we have enough players for each team. I have also attached a couple of photos from the day thanks to Lawrie Martin and Kevin Lewis. You can forward this email on to anyone you feel maybe be interested in joining the comp in some shape or form.