

Pacific School Games a hit!



The Pacific School Games (PSG) is run by School Sport Australia, and has not been held since 2008. The event in Adelaide this year was an attempt to resurrect the concept of the PSG. It was announced at the end of the PSG that they would be held again in Adelaide in 2017, based on the success of this year's event.

Table Tennis was included as an exhibition sport in 2015, but the general feeling was that it would be included again in 2017, given the potential of table tennis to attract international teams. Even though it

was only an exhibition sport this year, Table Tennis attracted more international teams than any other event. International teams included China, India, Macau, Cambodia.

Table Tennis also rated a specific mention by one of the speakers at one of the official functions we attended, and coaches from other sports were encouraged to make the effort to watch the table tennis if possible. I think the standard was an eye-opener for many people.

Flights and Accommodation
Players from across Queensland

met up in Brisbane and joined the contingent of about 650 Queensland school students who were competing in various sports at the PSG. A very good standard of accommodation was provided by Queensland School Sport (QSS).

We were transported to and from the venue each day by officials from QSS so transport was not a problem. Some students stayed with their parents in alternative accommodation, but six of our team of fifteen stayed in-house under the care of House-Parents provided by QSS.



Great job Aaron, Nicholas & Johnathan!

Venue: South Australian Netball Centre

The venue was very good, but it was a little disappointing to see the placement of the event within the venue being based around SA Netball training schedules. This particularly proved a problem on Finals Day. There was excellent grand-stand seating that was not available to the Table Tennis competition. Canteen facilities were adequate in terms of selection of food available.

Lighting for tables was quite good. There were unfortunately no hit-up tables and this was a major problem that needs to be resolved prior to the 2017 event if it is held at the same venue.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony on the first Sunday Night was a huge event, and marching into the venue as part of the Queensland Team (which was the second largest team at the Games) is something that our players are sure to remember. It was only when you looked around the oval and also at the numbers of spectators in the grand-stands that you gained an understanding of the magnitude of the Pacific School Games. For many of the students present it was a once in a life-time experience.

Standard of Competition

The standard of competition from overseas was very high. China, Macau, India, and Cambodia all had very strong teams.

It was disappointing to see the lack of full teams supplied by some states within Australia, but I suspect this was primarily due to the Australian Junior Championships being on only about a month earlier.

Cost factors would have been prohibitive for many players, and indeed this did impact on some players initially selected in the Queensland side. Timing of the event is critical in this respect and this is expected to change for the next PSG.

The range of ages also varied considerably with the two divisions, the Hopes division being 12 years of age and under, and the Junior Division ranging from 13 years to 18 years of age. As an example, Richard Littler at 13 years of age often found himself up against 18 year old opposition (one of whom, from India, had a full beard).

Having said that, the players who played for Queensland put up an outstanding effort during the week. The Queensland team was the largest from any Australian state.

Staffing of Queensland Team

For the size of our team, we had three coaches/managers, but trying to coach three teams in different parts of the venue simultaneously is a bit of a feat to achieve. If the PSG Table Tennis moves to three age



divisions as was suggested in the post games meeting, as well as the AWD category, another team manager/coach would be essential. Russell Mann (Deception Bay State High School) did a very good job with coaching and morale of the Hopes Division, as did Maria Drury (Bundaberg State High School) with the AWD competitors. I coached the Junior Teams (aged 13-18 years).

Finals/Medal Ceremony

It was no surprise to anyone that the overseas teams figured prominently in all semi-finals and finals, with China taking out the majority of the finals. In the AWD Category we were successful in gaining the Silver Medal in the Teams event, and Aaron Payne and Nicholas Jefferson were both successful in gaining Silver Medals in each of their respective categories. Jonathan Barrett was our third team member in the AWD category, who also gained a Teams Silver Medal.

Observations of the PSG

Badges/gifts

This seems to be a tradition with the teams from Asia, at the end of teams' matches they presented their opposing teams with banners from their schools, badges, souvenirs, etc. We were initially caught out by this, but obtained some Queensland School Sport PSG badges for the players to trade.



These ran out fast and some more were ordered courtesy of Table Tennis Queensland.

This exchange of gifts was a great aspect of the games, and led to a real camaraderie between the players, that also resulted in exchange of shirts, etc at the end of the Games. No doubt Facebook IDs were also exchanged, and the players made some good friends. I think this would be great to encourage at our own National Juniors events.

Playing Observations

Many of the overseas players, (females in particular), as well as some players from other Australian states used a combination bat of a high speed rubber on one side and long pimples on the other. Experience in playing against this type of bat was virtually a necessity in the Girls'

events, as the players who used them were very competent in their use.

Teams matches often came down to the doubles match to decide the outcome, and the overseas players were very well drilled in tactics to employ against different types of doubles combinations. Their variety of service, short returns up the line and cross-court attack were certainly well rehearsed and executed.

Final Comments

Overall, this was a great event. The players had a really enjoyable tournament and learned a great deal from the experience. The sportsmanship from our players often in the face of considerably superior opposition was commendable, and from a behavioural point of view our players were outstanding.



I would like to see TTQ continue to encourage our schools to participate in table tennis, and I am fairly confident that it will be included at the next PSG. We need to plan early and make sure we send the strongest team possible. We also need to encourage more international participation by countries like New Zealand, Japan, New Guinea, Cook Islands and Fiji.

The organisers of the PSG have expressed their desire for the games to take on a truly international flavour attracting teams from around the Pacific region.

I think table tennis is very well placed as a sport to be a major contributor to this goal and it is an opportunity to gain international playing experience and promote table tennis within

Australia that should not be under-estimated.

Many thanks also must go to the parents who helped out enormously throughout the event! Congratulations to all of our players!

Trevor Barrett
TTQ President

Queensland Schools Team Members 2015

Junior Male	Junior Female
Lachlan Miners	Briahna Connolly
Richard Littler	Sally McEniery
Jeffrey Chen	Jayde Treloar
	Leah Scott
Hopes Male	Hopes Female
Matthew Udal	Meg Freeman
Etienne Horak	Chelsea May
Andrew Udal	Tayla Scott
AWD Class 11	AWD Class 6-10
Nicholas Jefferson	Aaron Payne
Johnny Barrett	

Team Management

Team Manager – Trevor Barrett
Junior Team Coach – Trevor Barrett
Hope Team Coach – Russell Mann
AWD Team Coach – Maria Drury

