

## **Trans Tasman 8/9 May 2010- Herne Bay New Zealand**

### **Trans Tasman report by Marcel Philogene delegate and team member of the Australian Team to the Trans Tasman Championships held at Herne Bay Petanque Club in Auckland New Zealand**

My wife Solange and I arrived in Auckland on Thursday night at Onehunga Airport Auckland New Zealand. To our surprise the temperature was around the 15 degree. Very pleasant. A shuttle vehicle took us to our Hotel, the Quest Apartments in Auckland, about 30 minutes drive from the Airport. The plan was 9.30 am Friday pickup by Neil Kelly ,our team Manager, and head to the Herne Bay Petanque Club to familiarize ourselves with the grounds.

The pistes were about 14 meters by 3 ,very hard surface, with a cover of blue metals the size of a \$1 coins. No rolling pointing ,no rasbailles. Shooting had to be ball to ball.

This suited some of our shooters but not good news for the majority of our shooters and pointers. Had a few trial games and when we left we felt confident that we will handle the situation when the time comes .

The same afternoon, Neil and Jackie Kelly had prepared a power point presentation with the intention to get our competitive juice flowing. Good presentation, however a little bit too long for some.

In my view, the presentation did what it meant to achieve, i.e providing us with the will to win..

We were all in high spirit when we reached our next rendez vous for dinner at the local Thai Restaurant.

The next morning, we were greeted by the President PNZ, Lorraine Brock and the local dignitaries.

The Opening Ceremony was very colourful and interesting. We were welcomed by the officials and a welcoming speech in the native Maori language .

The Saturday games consisted of Doubles competitions

Our teams consisted of players from WA, ex Victorians, NSW and, our first Tasmanian Australian representative, Terry Dando.

After the first few games we realized that the kiwis had done their home work. We were in for a big shock, we were fronted by a well trained and discipline outfit,.we were never in the game, winning only 12 games out of 60. End of the day result 48 to 12 in favor of the hosts

Some thing had to be done if we were to be a show the next day.

A team meeting was held the same evening at Brett and Alison's apartments and composition of teams for the next day's Triples was agreed upon.

The triples the next day was a very different story. We finished the day equal on points with the hosts, the over 60 team went further by winning their category.

Final score 72/36 for the host teams. New Zealand had managed to beat us **3 years in a row.**

The Presentation night was a lively affair. I was asked to present medals to the New Zealand teams.

We were greeted with the traditional Haka?? and a very nice goodbye song ( sung in Maori) by members of the NZ team. Drinking and dancing were on the cards, very enjoyable night.( most of us were very merry, one even attempting to dancing on the table)

#### **What went wrong??**

Simply that the NZ teams were a better prepared outfit. They used the home advantage to great success.

Their doubles teams consisted of better shooters and pointers .The New Zealand teams had specifically practice double combinations for the tournament. A well planned strategy

The pistes were prepared specifically to suit their individual skills. I am told that the players spent many hours honing their shooting skills. They did it well.

We made the mistake of trying to balance the teams ( pointer /shooter, strong/weaker player) That strategy was corrected for the triples.

**What went right??**

The Saturday games brought us back to earth, but by no means were we going to lay down arms. We still could win it if we won all our games on Sunday. Everyone of us believed that this could be achieved.

The decision to team compatible players together for the triples was accepted by all to be the solution.. We had to do something to save face. It worked!! We did not win it, but we never gave up despite some of us being very sick with the flu..

As the PFA delegate I can tell Australia that it should be proud of its representatives, you could not get better ambassadors for our country and for the game of petanque . The teams deserves our congratulations for their behaviour throughout the weekend..

You loose some, you win some!!

I believe that the Trans Tasman exercise was successful, as it achieved a re-enforcement of our relationships with our cousins , the Kiwis, we have learnt about their selection process which I believe can be copied in Australia. As the PFA delegate, I have made a commitment with Lorraine Brock and some of her entourage to share the things we are doing right with the view to strengthen the game in our region.

Lastly, I wish to point out that criticism of the representative team by some did not damper the enthusiasm shown by members of the team. I wish to remind these critics that although the selection system of the 2 previous years was seen as the perfect way to go, the result stands at Kiwis 3-Oz 0.

So Ozzies, let's put aside our differences and work together towards reversing this trend..

Regards

Marcel Philogene

PFA Delegate to the Trans Tasman