



FOOTBALL FEDERATION
TASMANIA

FROM THE DESK OF THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

16 APRIL, 2010

This will be the last column for a couple of weeks as by the time you read this I will be on holiday in Canada catching up with my family and my dog. I return to Hobart the first week of May, full of optimism following the performances of the Under 13 females and males at the national championships last week in Canberra.

Both teams, who will now play in leagues in Hobart, under 13 females in an under 13 males league and under 13 males in an under 15 males league, put on a terrific show and have helped gain considerable respect for Tasmania's young players on the national front.

I spoke in last week's column about the females, who were highly competitive at the nationals and had three players chosen for the Group B All-Stars team. This week it is the turn of the males to be in the spotlight.

Taking care of the team with me was assistant coach Kurt Reynolds, manager Rod Andrews and sports trainer John Wheeler. I thank my colleagues for the excellent work and support they provided.

I also thank the players - who did themselves and their state proud - and their parents, both those that were there and those who were unable to make the trip.

The team finished with three wins and two losses; the first time anyone can recall a Tasmanian team returning from the nationals with more wins than losses. The two defeats were against North South Wales Metro 2 and North South Wales Country. Against the Metro side, Tasmania played with 10 players for virtually the whole game after one was sent off for an adjudged intentional handball.

Tasmania scored 18 goals, four more than any other team, an average of more than three a game. One neutral coach nicknamed the team: "Goals-a-go-go." This team attacked and kept on attacking, no matter what. Remember, finding and encouraging attacking, creative players who can beat opponents and score goals is much harder than organizing a defence.

Seven different players scored. Darcy Hall and Michael Holden finished joint second in the tournament scoring charts with four goals each, one less than top spot. Isaac Kenyi and Lachlan Senior were joint third with three goals each. Not a game went by without Tasmania having at least 15 or more shots on goal and the woodwork was struck numerous times.

Football Federation Tasmania Technical Director Han Berger told a coaches meeting during the week that Australia needs creative players who can make the difference.

Create is what Tasmania's youngsters did in abundance, sticking solidly to a 1-4-3-3 system, boldly playing out from the back and the goalkeepers never kicking the ball clear from their hands. The females, it must be repeated, did likewise.

Kenyi shot five times from kick offs. Three were saved by the goalkeeper and one flew so close over the bar everyone was on their feet believing it was going in. One flowing move from back to front finished with Kenyi heading in a goal at the far post from a chest high cross. Call me biased, but it was the best team goal of the week.

In another game, Alex Walter mesmerized one opponent with close dribbling skills and then back heeled the ball into the path of an on running team mate. It was magic and there were many more moments like it.

Our state does not have the massive number of players New South Wales can call on, but our youngsters more than gave them a run for their money technically.

Four players, Holden, Dean Watkins, Kenyi and En Soo She were chosen for the Group B All-Stars team who played Group B winners, New South Wales Metro 2.

The All-Stars won 3-0. The scorers were Holden, Watkins and Soo She. Soo She scored after Holden dribbled past an opponent and crossed for him to tap in. Watkins, who is left footed, hammered in his goal with the right foot from the edge of the penalty area. Holden smashed his effort into the top right corner from 15 yards.

Attacking, skilful, creative players? Tasmania has them and everywhere on the island such individuals must be actively encouraged to perform their skills without criticism or fear of failure. With continued, correct coaching and training, plus the possession football approach to the game that is being rightly called for by FFA, our state will continue to climb the national charts.