

The word went out." The Bass Strait Cup is on again".

Last time the Tasmanians were victorious so it was time to turn the tables and bring the cup back to Victoria.

Expressions of interest were requested on the VPA website and it was decided that a team from Moorooduc would take up the challenge.

It was our turn to venture across Bass Strait to experience some Tasmanian hospitality.

Alan[salty] Saltmarsh [coach] and Peter Ridgeway transported the horses on the Spirit of Tasmania on the Wednesday night to be met by the rest of the team who flew across on Thursday morning.

The team were Dean Crichton [captain], Warren Hunt, Grant [that's what I'm talking about] Mitchell, Harry Vines, Lachlan and Elliott Avis.

The horses all travelled very well and were in fine form on arrival.

Gowrie Park is set in a beautiful valley at the foot of Mt. Roland , an hours drive south of Devonport. Mt. Roland can be seen in the background of the team photos.

There is one field with an excellent surface albeit a little undulating.

We were told to bring gumboots and wet weather gear but neither were needed as the temperature was in the mid 20s everyday.

Up early on Friday morning it was breakfast prepared and cooked by Liz Saltmarsh and Helen Galvin [senior] and then Salty took charge.

The boys were on the horses and in full training. Alan decided to play the young boys in one chukka, and the old boys in the other .

Late morning we all set off for Cradle Mountain and enjoyed lunch in the tavern with a couple of local ciders.

Saturday come around with great anticipation. The Cup is to be played at 3pm and so after the horses had been walked , Grant Mitchell sprung into action with some team boot camp exercises to get the blood flowing. Michael Galvin arrived from Melbourne as the interstate umpire . Then it was off to Sheffield where a tractor pull and steam rally were in full swing. It was a great way to relax before the main event.

At 245pm everyone was mounted , sparking in VPA blazers, brow bands and rosettes. We were ready.

After the formalities it was down to business. 6 six minute chukkas.

Lachlan Harry and Elliott were the first chukka and took Victoria to a commanding lead of five goals with excellent work in the line up.

Grant Warren and Dean continued to consolidate the position in the second chukka

From then on we never looked back as the team rose to the occasion and played skillfully in the spirit of the game.

It was great teamwork with many players having individual best performances as noted by the coach.

The Tasmanians fought hard but we had come a long way and were not going home without the cup. The final score of VIC 23 TAS 7 did not accurately reflect the level of intensity of the game. It was just that we wanted the ball a little bit more than they did.

I am sure in two years time when the Tasmanians come to Victoria to arrest the cup back we will have to be on top of our game.

The general standard of umpiring was very high and for this the Tasmanians are to be commended.

As a team we would like to say a special thank you to

Alan Saltmarsh for the transport and excellent coaching

Michael Galvin for his excellent umpiring and commentating

Liz Saltmarsh for the catering

Helen Galvin for her never ending blue water bottle

Lisa Avis for the tails

Mark Avis