

Kanga Cup 2013

What started as a brief chat over a coffee in January with my Team Manager George about the 'Kanga Cup' in which I had heard of but knew nothing about, eventuated into one of the greatest experiences 14 kids and 22 other parents, friends, brothers and sisters will have in their lifetime . For the players themselves the experience of being together for 7 days, training, playing and the challenges that were put in front of them they will not forget, and more importantly all done in a Comets shirt!



What an amazing experience we had in Canberra for the 2013 Kanga Cup. Record number of team participations ever and 'We' the Adelaide Comets Under 12s were for the first ever time in the Club's history, a part of this historic event. Entered into the Plate division originally, we only received a phone call 3 days out from the start of the tournament from the Kanga cup committee that they will now be pushing our team up to the Cup division playing the likes of Singok (South Korean team), Perth SC (Squad selected from 4 soccer clubs in Perth), and the Three NSW academy teams from different regions Northbridge, Southern Branch and Redfern.

What to expect? Who are these teams? How do the play? What are their strengths and weaknesses? That was my challenge as soon as we touched down in Canberra.

What eventuated was commentary from all teams that we played and from teams in our Cup Group A and B divisions – Who are these boys from SA called ‘Comets’...or as some called us “The Chicken Salts” as was our Major Sponsor logo so dominant that caught the eye of 1000s of people around the grounds – Great Sponsorship opportunities for all you businesses out there wishing to hit the interstate markets !!

After the opening ceremony in front of approximately 2000 people, the following morning we entered into our first game v Perth. After a slow start we eventually got into the game late in the first half and with a goal won the game 1-0 to give us a great start. Such was the amazement and panic of the Perth Coach he had 2 coaches on each side of the Pitch yelling out instructions for their side to get back. The boys celebrated the victory with friends and parents alike.

Day 2 - Today brought us facing two academy sides from NSW - Our first game was a tough 1-1 draw with Southern Branch and our second another tough game v Redfern Raiders in which we eventually won 2-0 ...after the day's proceedings and results in other games we edged closer to a semi-final game.



Day 3 – Our biggest day and one the boys were looking forward to in playing against the might of the South Korean outfit – Singok. We knew that with a favourable result in our first game v Northbridge the boys were through to the Semi – Finals, if we drew or lost and results went against us in other games we would have to beat Singok to go through. Game v Northbridge was an exceptional game were the boys totally outclassed their opponents but couldn't find the back of the net ...or did they!! What was a clear goal was ruled offside and game ended 0-0. Boys reaction said it all, they thought they had not progressed to the next stage, but with a favourable result on the pitch next to us, we knew the boys were through – when we told them they broke out in hysteria. The Comets were through to the semi-finals. Game v Singok was an experience the boys would never forget and a

game that will live in their memories for various reasons ...ultimately after the game after Singok won 3-0, all of us at the ground will never forget the smiles on the South Korean boy's faces after our boys embraced them and took photos together. The performance of the Boys ultimately meant that the Singok Coach cancelled their sight-seeing tours for that afternoon and ordered another training session for his team!!

Day 4 - Semi-Final Day – What an exciting day for all. We took the boys down to the local grounds for a recovery session as all the games started taking their toll and there were a few boys with aches and pains . After the session, a light lunch and massages for the boys we headed down to the grounds. Game started at 2.45pm – The boys were extremely nervous, I could see it in their body language and our warm up routines. The game didn't start off well , conceding three goals in the first 15 mins , but then after a few positional and structural changes what transpired was one where the Comets Boys reaped praise from everyone at the ground. The fight, endeavour, work ethic and possession of the game against a Select squad was amazing an for the two Under 11s boys drafted to the squad, one they will never forget as we were back to 3-2 with 10 mins to gounfortunately we couldn't get the equalizer and to the relief of the ACT coach the whistle blew . What a game!! What an effort!! After a few tears from some of the boys, I let them gather their thoughts, spoke to the boys and got them to sing our song. To their Credit the boys sang the Comets song louder than any other game, which showed me how proud they were of each other and how close they had bonded. This amazing performance caught the eye of our Singok friends and a translator and their Coach approached me after the game and congratulated us after the game for this performance and the performance against their own team (and also to get some handy formation tips of how to play against ACT) – that for me was a highlight for our team and our Club that stamped their name at the 2013 Kanga Cup .



Overall, this event was a huge learning experience for all that attended and one the kids will never forget. I would like to thank all that helped, to make this happen and to all our sponsors who provided assistance in different avenues, especially Mitani Chicken Salt.

Thanks