

2017 saw the first time for most Junior girls playing outside the Volleyball academy program. Following in the footsteps of Van Diemen's who have attended several the seaside tournaments, I had decided it would be good to take some of the former Tasmanian Volleyball Academy players away to a tournament so that they could have some more experience outside of playing state league in Tasmania and in addition gain some coaching experience for myself as there are currently limited opportunities within Tasmania for coaches outside of the TVA program.

We had a less than ideal preparation with only two trainings where the whole team was there. Despite this the girls were in good spirits and went away with a positive attitude. I told them that it would be challenging and that I would be challenging them to step outside their comfort zones.

The team consisted of:

- Steph Hind
- Stevie Dwyer
- Liv McKee
- Sarah Macquarie
- Emily Macquarie
- Gilly Millar
- Tahlia Kitson
- Rachel Kitson (Coach)
- Jenny Macquarie (Manager)



Day 1

We started day 1 playing our first game against Heathfield Gold. This felt a little like being back at Schools Cup, although the traditional uniforms were nowhere to be seen. The girls struggled with serving and passing which showed in their results. We lost several points in one whole rotation where no-one could get a serve in, which cost us valuably. The passing did improve in the second set, which meant we had some rallies. We lost a lot of points due to service errors and passing with the usually strong Stevie struggling in the first set. After that, the girls started to improve and when we managed to get a good pass up, we generally hit a winner.

This was the theme on day 1. We struggled a bit with our passing. Following the struggles in the first couple of sets I changed the lineup to see if that could improve how we were playing.

In our match against Monash we had a healthy lead in the first set only for them to come back and steal it from us winning 26-24. Unfortunately, that was the theme for that match. We would start out in front, with some great serving and play and would get out in front and then Monash came back. We were still quite competitive losing to Monash 26-24, 25-16 and 18-16. That was one of our closes matches.



We benefited from having some strong blocking from the middles (Tahlia Kitson, Gilly Millar and Sarah Macquarie) and benefited from moving Stevie to outside hitter and having Emily libero on for our middles and sometimes our outside hitters.

Our third game of the day was much better and the team had started to get their groove. After two unsuccessful sets, I decided to completely change it moving Tahlia from opposite to Middle and Sarah to Opposite. This proved successful with Sarah hitting some winners and Tahlia and Gilly blocking strongly. The outsides of Liv and Stevie combined with Emily's strong backcourt and Steph's setting saw the girls out to a huge lead. Then they lost concentration and although the score didn't show it, Adelaide had started to come back. Luckily, the girls managed to hold Adelaide off to take their first set for the tournament.

Day 2

Day two saw changes to the lineups pretty much each set and each game. The aim was to try to ensure that all players had a fair go on court whilst still maintaining some competitiveness.

Unfortunately, I had expected the full results of each match would be published following the tournament, which didn't happen, so I don't have the results from day two.

Day 2 went much the same as day 1, but the passing had improved significantly. Unfortunately, serving overall was not to the usual standard seen from these girls. Most of them had a few runs on serve, which was much improved from the day before. The girls had to win their last match to ensure they didn't have to play off for last and second last unfortunately the girls fell short, which meant playing off at 4.45 for last position. The girls were now playing to ensure they didn't have to do duty following their match.

The girls were up against Southern Cross Cobras who were the bottom of the other pool. They were playing well and won the first set convincingly. They were well up in the second set, but then a lost concentration yet again and allowed Southern Cross back into the game and ended up losing the second set to them.

A third set was required and again our girls were up and then allowed the other team back into the set. In the end the score was 16-17 in favour of SCC. The siren went to end the game, but the referee allowed them to play on. At the end of the match the teams were advised the last point didn't count. In the end, there had to be a count back to determine who would do duty and luckily our girls won, by two points. It was decided to count it as a victory.



Over the two days the girls improved significantly. The whole idea of this trip was to expose the team to a different type of volleyball. The main goal of the trip was for the team to learn a little about themselves and hopefully play some good volleyball. This was a mental learning curve as well as a chance for skills development for the team. Even though they failed to reach the finals, the experience was valuable and the girls really bonded and by the end of the second day, any rotations thrown at them, they saw as a challenge.

Each game I placed players in different roles, which at times was a challenge for them as many had played a specific role for much of their playing career and it was an opportunity for them to branch out and try something a bit different than what they were used to.

Each of the players improved in confidence over the two days and after two days of coaching my I felt that I had learned a lot as well. Whilst the results didn't show on the board, the girls were nevertheless quite competitive, which some great setting from Steph and big hits from the girls when it was all working.

Even if these girls don't attend another tournament as a team, I think they have taken a lot away from this experience. I hadn't coached them before and had limited coaching opportunities over the past few years and this was an opportunity for me to develop my skills and for the girls to have a different perspective on things. There were some things I could improve upon, but overall, I think we all worked well together.

I think it is important for these kinds of tournaments to be attended by Tasmanian teams, because it shows players that once the program is finished, it doesn't have to be the end of playing interstate tournaments. It gives the players great opportunities to gain experience outside of Tasmania and to play other teams.

I would like to than VTI for allowing me the opportunity to take this team away. Hopefully down the track our teams can be more competitive.

I would also like to thank Van Diemens and Boss (in particular Chris Rice for allowing us to train with their team and for also helping me with the coaching and to Triin and Sabine for offering their assistance along the way as well as the support during the tournament from all of them. It was great to see all three Tassie teams supporting each other when they could, during the tournament.

I'd also like to note, that even though the girls weren't successful in winning the volleyball tournament, they won with entertainment. Prior to their last match, the warmup songs included High School Musical and The Horses at which time all teams in that section of the stadium joined in singing.

Results from Day 1 are below as well as some photos taken during match play.

Results from day 1 were: (Thanks to Chris Rice for supplying these):

Heathfield Gold v We Showed Up – **3:0** - 25-12, 25-21, 25-11

Monash v We Showed Up – **3:0** – 26-24, 25-16, 18-16

Adelaide University v We Showed Up – **2:1** – 25-19, 25-15-18-24

Unfortunately throughout the tournament we failed to get a photo of the whole team, so the shot on the first page is the closest we got.

Thanks again to VTI for providing us with the support to ensure we got there. Thanks to Mick Adams for offering for us to work Australia day to provide us with some additional funds. It allowed us to cut the costs as low as possible for the girls to ensure they could afford to attend.

Whilst I'm not sure I will have this opportunity again, I'm hoping that this will be the start of a bright future for volleyball Tasmania with three teams in attendance at Warrnamnbool. Hopefully it might mean other teams might attend other interstate tournaments such as Good Neighbour and other tournaments on offer.

Rachel Kitson

Coach - Weshowdup