

2011 SENIOR STATE TEAM REPORT

The North Western Tasmanian town of Burnie played host to the 2011 Li-Ning King of Burnie Ede Clendinnen Shield and Australian Closed Championships. Defending our title from last year, a very different looking more youthful side took to the courts for us this year. Retirement and unavailability meant quite a few of our top players did not compete giving us a chance to start a rebuilding phase. This year's team consisted of the following players:

Chad Whitehead	Verdet Kessler
Andrew Harvey (Captain)	Talia Saunders
Lionel Seah	Gerrelyn Glico
Teng-wei Khoo	Jun Ban
Jonathon Liu	Simon White (Mangaer)
Chris Thirlwell (Coach)	Jeff Green (Umpire)

Our opening match saw us take on New South Wales who had a few new players at the top of their list making their debut for the state. Despite some excellent performances by the players we managed to lose a couple of close matches and hence the tie 8-5. This performance was actually very pleasing as New South Wales was definitely one of the strongest teams competing and deserved their win.

The next morning we faced the home state Tasmania where we were in control throughout the whole fixture. Our girls never dropped a rubber whilst our boys dominated both of the doubles. This form continued onto the mixed doubles giving us a final score of 10-3.

The next morning we faced off against Victoria. Once again this was a very tough battle with the rubbers locked at 5 all going into the mixed doubles. Our girls dominated only dropping one singles which was made up for by a great win in the first men's doubles. However Victoria's experienced players proved too strong for us by taking out all three mixed doubles matches. Another 8-5 loss to a very strong team.

In the evening we played probably the strongest Territories team I have ever seen. Although they were very competitive in many of the matches we always seemed to have the edge when things began to get tight. An excellent team performance saw us win 13 rubbers to nil despite a few rubbers going to three games.

Our final match was against the very strong Western Australian team. After spending a very long time trying to work out the best match ups for the tie we knew if we played our best we would have a slim chance of upsetting the team which on paper should have won the shield. Western Australia's strength was in their men and I was confident that we would be able to win all of the women's matches. Somehow we needed to win a men's rubber and our best chance would be in doubles. With this in mind I decided to play all of our newer younger players in singles and save our more experienced players for the

doubles and mixed doubles games. The girls played their part by continuing their outstanding form, winning all three singles and both doubles. As expected, Western Australia dominated the men's singles matches and the second doubles. However Chad and Lionel caused the upset we needed in the first doubles with an excellent win in three games. This gave us a 6-4 lead going into the mixed doubles with Western Australia in a complete state of shock! Lionel and Talia then went on and won their mixed giving us the win in the tie. With the pressure off Andrew and Gerrelyn also went on and won their mixed prompting Western Australia to forfeit the first mixed doubles. This gave us a 9-4 ambushed win against a side that should have won the Clendinnen Shield this year.

So the final result saw New South Wales defeat Victoria for the title 8-5. This meant that we ended up with a bronze medal in third place. This was an excellent achievement for this young team without the help of some of the state's best players. This was certainly one of my proudest moments as senior team coach over the years.

The Australian Closed Championships started the next afternoon. Verdet Kessler made it all the way to the final in the women's singles before losing to the top seeded Michelle Zhang from N.S.W. In the women's doubles Verdet teamed up with Talia where they were runners up to Michelle Zhang and Ann Slee (Victoria) in the final. Jun and Gerrelyn had a great tournament making it to the semi finals. In the mixed doubles Jun and Teng-wei made it to the quarterfinals losing in three tight games. Verdet and Chad made it to the semi finals before losing closely to the eventual winners Talia and her Western Australian partner Nick Kidd! Some excellent results from our team indeed.

This concluded an excellent week for our players, especially the younger and newer members of the team. For them to come away with their first ever team medal for the state was a great achievement and will only wet their appetite for next year.

Chris Thirlwell
State Team Coach