

## South Australian Senior Team Report

The 2007 Ede Clendinnen Shield and Closed Australian Championships were held this year for the first time in Darwin, Northern Territory. Our whole team was looking forward to escaping our cold winter to defend our title from last year in Darwin's hot climate.

This year the team was made up of the following players:

Chad Whitehead	Leanne Choo
Milin Parikh	Kate Wilson-Smith (Captain)
Andrew Surman	Talia Saunders
Vincent Choo	Katie Wilczynski
Andrew Harvey	Jeff Green (Umpire)
Chris Thirlwell (Coach)	Simon White (Manager)

Drawn in the 'group of death' with Queensland and Western Australia we faced a very tough challenge to make the final. With these two teams and Victoria fielding considerably stronger teams this year our task was going to be extremely tough.

Our first match was against Queensland who we had narrowly defeated last year. We claimed all of the women's singles but lost all of the men's. We then split the doubles matches with both states winning one men's and one women's match to leave the tie locked at 5 all with the three mixed doubles to play. Our depth in mixed allowed us to win all three matches and take a tight tie 8-5. The final score not really reflecting the closeness of the match.

Our second match was against Western Australia who featured now retired Nicholas Kidd who represented England for the last 5 years before retiring and returning to his family in Perth. After the singles matches we lead 5-1 with Leanne, Kate and Talia winning again. Milin and Andrew also were able to win their matches. The doubles matches were different though with W.A. winning both men's and South Australia winning both women's doubles. This left the rubber score at 7-3 leading into the mixed doubles. We were able to win the first and second mixed which won us a tie and allowed us to substitute some of our younger players into the last mixed which was a dead rubber. The final score was a comfortable 9-4, securing us top position in the 'group of death'.

In the semi final we played the second placed team from the other group, Tasmania. We started off extremely well winning all of the singles matches and only dropping the second men's doubles to give us an unbeatable lead of 9-1 before the mixed doubles. Once again this gave us the opportunity to substitute some of our younger players into the third mixed doubles, with us finally winning the tie 12-1. This was a good reflection on how tough our group was compared to the other group.

Victoria won their semi final match against W.A. and so in a repeat of last year we were to meet again in the final to play off for the shield. This year Victoria were considerably stronger featuring 3 Olympians in their team. Victoria went into the match as heavy favourites and few people gave us much chance of winning. The singles went according to form with Victoria winning all of the men's matches and South Australia winning all of the women's matches. The doubles were split down the middle with Kate and Leanne winning the first women's and Chad and Andrew causing a major upset by winning the first men's doubles. This left the tie in the balance at 5 all. The first mixed was extremely close with Victorian pair playing very well to just nudge out Kate and Chad in three games. It was the same story in the second mixed with Leanne and Andrew being edged out in three games. Although the fixture had already been lost Milin and Talia fought on well to win a very close third

mixed giving a final score line 6-7 to Victoria. An outstanding achievement from our team to get so close in what has been described as one of the best finals ever played.

The individual events started after a welcomed days break. Our players continued their excellent form throughout the event. Our players featured heavily in quarters, semis and finals with Leanne defending her national singles crown from last year and her doubles crown with Kate. Kate and Chad also defended their national mixed title as well! Talia and her Victorian doubles partner won the plate doubles. Some more outstanding achievements for our small state based program.

Carnival rankings for singles were announced at the end of the week with Leanne being awarded the number 1 ranking, Kate number 7 and Talia number 9. Chad was awarded number 6 ranking.

So in summary it was an outstanding week with all of our players performing beyond expectation. Although we did not retain the Clendinnen Shield we were able to give a performance which was every bit equal to that of last year, something that I am extremely proud of.

A special thank you to Jeff Green for his umpiring efforts all week and being an important member of the team. Also a special thank you to Simon White for all of his efforts in managing the team and fixing any little problem that came along.

Chris Thirlwell  
Senior State Team Coach