

All-Stars too good for Adelaide



The Indigenous All-Stars were just too good for the Adelaide Crows in reclaiming the Pastor Sir Douglas Nichols Cup in Darwin.

The All Stars, led by Adelaide Crow Andrew McLeod, defeated the AFL club, 14.13 (97) to 6.7 (43) at Marrarra Stadium.

Former Pioneer rover and Minahan medallist, Matt Campbell, became the first Centralian to win the Graham 'Polly' Farmer

medal.

In the week leading up to the match, held every two years in Darwin, more than 60 Indigenous AFL players conducted community visits in Darwin, Jabiru, Katherine, Croker Island and Ramingining.



A selection of images from the Indigenous All Stars match in Darwin. All Stars were victorious over the Adelaide Crows. Pictures by Darren Moncrieff and Monica Napper



AND FOOTY IN THE CENTRE...

The bush makes an impact on the town

The 2008 Central Australian Football League season was the first year of a combined country and town competition, but it was the bush that forged the enduring moments for fans.

Last season brought together the five teams that had previously played in the town competition and five teams from the Country Cup competition into one league.

Some pundits had expected the town teams to dominate the league but those predictions didn't eventuate. It was Yuendumu's win over the townies, Pioneer, in the grand final and star Yuendumu player Liam Jurrah's recruitment by Melbourne in the AFL that highlighted a successful transition to the combined competition.

The bush community of Ltyentye Apurte balanced the final four of the finals nicely along with a second town team West.

AFL Central Australia general manager Jake McCauley said last year's grand final was a perfect outcome for the new competition.

"It was fantastic and from an organisation's point-of-view I don't think you could have a better grand final," he said. "Yuendumu, what

a great story. It will be interesting to see if they can back up again this year.

"Ltyentye Apurte was in the final four and Anmatjere and Hermannsburg were fifth and sixth so it was an excellent performance by the community sides. It just shows the strength of the community sides and the competition's better for having them in it."

The recruitment of Jurrah by Melbourne in the AFL's preseason draft was also a highlight of the season.

"What a great story," McCauley said. "It just goes to show the talent on show in Central Australia. I think when the new representative Northern Territory side takes shape to play in the Queensland competition this year, it'll showcase even more local talent."

The creation of the combined bush and town competition also meant great financial and travel demands on the community sides as it required they travel the hundreds of kilometres to Alice Springs twice as often during the season.

"It was probably organisation-wise as much as money-wise that contributed to the travel

problems last year," McCauley said.

"This year we're confident the clubs are better off financially and organisation-wise. We're certainly going to work with those clubs and help them if they need it."

The B grade competition has been boosted this year with the addition of a team from Ltyentye Apurte, which will be the only community-based side with four town teams making up the numbers. All B grade games will also be played at Traeger Park this year.

The new season kicks off with the Lightning Carnival over the Easter weekend and a sponsorship deal means it won't cost teams to enter, although players will have to pay to enter the ground each day.

"Especially with the intervention and the distances teams travel it can be difficult for community sides," McCauley said.

Under the AFLCA's healthy lifestyle program no alcohol will be sold at the football this season except to members in Mona's Lounge.