



Pre-Match Tactics

Micky J: “Where are you?”

Fabbo: “In a taxi with half the team.”

Micky J: “Which half - the good, the bad or the ugly?”

Fabbo: “The ugly, and we’re pumped! Where are you?”

Micky J: “In another taxi with the jumpers and shorts. How many players do we have?”

Fabbo: “8 plus whatever they give us.”

Thus endeth Hanoi Swans pre-match tactical discussions.

Thanks to the infusion of talent from HCMC, both sides ran on to the ground with 12-a-side plus 2 interchange. The occasional scudding cloud helped keep the sun off our nude scones but 10.30 in HCMC is still bloody hot for northerners (note to self: remember to sunscreen head – red GT sunburn stripes through the helmet are not a good look).

A Bookend Siren Sounds

Derby 2 started at a furious pace. Saigon Geckos kicked the first goal within seconds of the bounce. Swans replied with Scottie’s first for the day at the end of a well-timed lead, and it was on. It may have been sunny, but it was raining goals. Movement of the ball from one end of the RMIT pitch to the other was amazingly precise with both teams playing a style of football that belied the lack of match practice.

In the first half, Captain Gus and Euan were getting first touch of the pill in the ruck for the Swans, but the Saigon lads were clearing it from the bounces. This put pressure on our defence, but a hastily thrown together back line lead by Matt G at Centre Half Back and Eddie in the goal square did a great job. If the Geckos long bombs didn’t go through for a goal, these lads and their cohorts on the wings, “Thailand Tiger” Chris and Gaelic Bernard, propelled it into the forward line.

Fabbo was leading well from full forward and wrapping his strong plates of meat around the leather. A nice little toe poke from Scottie near the end of the second quarter saw MJ kms clear to dob an easy sausage roll and give us some hope going into the long break.

Half time scores were Gekkos 53 - Swans 37

The premiership quarter was highlighted by the emergence of our Rastafarian import. Naom was impassable on the Back Flank and won a number of free kicks by being first to the ball. The Damo twins were also putting their bodies on the line to clear the ball. This enabled Chris B and Matt W to find a bit of space in the forward line for some uncontested chest marks.

Unfortunately, our captain was unable to take the field for the second half due to a crippling shoulder injury and we missed his height in the ruck. We also failed to take advantage of the

DERBY 2 – Saigon Geckos Vs Hanoi Swans

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slight breeze blowing to the river end and fiddled around with the ball a bit too much. Unselfish play does not always create goals!

Phil Crouch at Centre Half Forward for the Geckos took a strong mark against the play, and against 3 opponents, and slotted one through on the siren as a steadier. At three-quarter time, scores were Geckos 66 – Swans 51.

The final quarter was all Gekkos as their rugby training came to the fore. Their tackling and hard approach to the ball meant they kept things moving their way. Long kicks with the wind were rewarded with a few big goals for the Geckos, especially Jamie's pick-up and goal from the centre bounce.

A positive aspect of the Swans last quarter was the introduction of our Vina member, Vu, who promptly found himself in the right place a few times. Where were you at the start of the game, mate?

The Other Bookend Siren Sounds

Full time: Gekkos 99 – Swans 57.

Thanks heaps to the umps, Ashley from Ha Noi and Rob from HCMC, as well as to Landon for doing a great job preparing the RMIT "oval".