

The Program

Saturday 14th July 2007:

- 7:00 am – team buses leave for the ground
- 8:15 am – Opening address and National Anthem
- 8:30 am to 3:40 pm – Preliminary Games (each team to play 4 matches)
- 4:10 pm to 5:00 pm – Grand Final
- 5:15 pm to 5:45 pm – Post-match Presentations of Winner, Best in GF, Best for Champs. Presentation of All-Asian Team.
- 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm – Post-match BBQ dinner, drinks and entertainment at the ground (shower facilities available)
- 7:00 pm – First bus leaves for hotel
- 8:00 pm – Last bus leaves for hotel

- **Sunday 15th July 2007:**

Free for recovery or sight seeing

Introduction

This year the Thailand Tigers Australian Football Club has been nominated to host the 8th annual Asian championships in Bangkok, Thailand. This will be the second time Thailand has held the Asian Championships since the inaugural event in 2000. Thailand hosted the 2001 Asian Championships at Thana City, Bangkok. This year poses to be the biggest and best Championships to date with a total of 9 teams coming from Bali, China Reds, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, and of course the Thailand Tigers.

The 2007 Asian Championships will be played at the Thailand Tigers home ground, Bangkok Patana School (BPS), which boasts one of the best playing surfaces in Asia. The day consists of each team playing 4 preliminary games then the top 2 teams playing out the grand final for the highly sought after Asian Championship Cup.

Adequate facilities at BPS will be provided for all players, officials and spectators. Food and drinks will be available on a pay-as-you-go basis.

When: Saturday 14th July 2007

Where: Bangkok Patana School

Time: 8:00am to 8:00pm

The History of the Asian Championships

The first ever Asian Championship was held at Jakarta, Indonesia in 2000, comprising of teams from Indonesia, Brunei, Hong Kong and Singapore. The combined Indonesian team took the cup in the grand final against Hong Kong.

The 2001 event was held in Bangkok with Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia competing. Singapore took the cup from Indonesia in the final.

In 2002 the Championships moved to Singapore and was contested between Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and a combined China/Malaysia side. The final was a repeat of 2001, but with Indonesia winning back their crown.

The 2003 championships went north to Hong Kong, with 2 sides from Hong Kong competing along with Indonesia and China. Hong Kong beat Indonesia in a close final.

In 2004, the 5th Asian Championships were held in Kuala Lumpur with 7 teams participating Singapore, Thailand, Jakarta, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Bali. Hong Kong went back to back overcoming Singapore by 40 points in the final in wet and sloppy conditions.

2005 saw a total of 9 teams from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, China (Shanghai), Jakarta, Bali and Asian Championships debutants Japan and the Philippines fight it out for the cup in Manila. Singapore rose to the challenge and took out the 6th annual Asian Championship Cup.

The 7th annual Asian Championships were held in 2006 in Jakarta. 7 teams competed, including Japan who toured for their second year. The Jakarta Bintangs hosted Bali, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. The grand final was played between Singapore and Bali, with Singapore winning the Cup for the second year in a row. An exhibition match was also held, featuring a local team who held their own against a more experienced team of selected veterans.

The History of Footy in Asia

Australian Rules has been played in Asia since 1990, with a match in Hong Kong, between two teams of expatriate Australians. Umpires were flown from Australia for the match, and there was a carnival atmosphere with flyovers from the British Royal Air Force, donkey rides for the juniors and numerous other events. A healthy crowd of around 4,000 was in attendance. In 1992, teams from Malaysia and Tokyo were formed, and the expatriates in Hong Kong combined to form a team which toured both of these locations in 1992.

In the years that followed, teams from Singapore, Thailand, Saigon, Hanoi, Jakarta, Bali, Brunei, Cambodia, China and the Philippines were all formed, with all sides competing in some capacity.

In 2002, the Bali 9s tournament was inaugurated and won by the Jakarta Bintangs. The competition was repeated and confirmed as a fixture on the Asian footy circuit in 2003 when it was held on the anniversary of the tragic Bali bombings. Jason McCartney played for Bali in the tournament, with teams from Batemans Bay in NSW, Hong Kong, Jakarta and Malaysia also competing. Prime Minister John Howard and his wife, along with opposition leader Simon Crean and his wife, were in attendance, as were several former AFL players. The Prime Minister presented the cup to the winning Bateman's Bay side.

In 2004, the third annual Bali nines was played with teams from Bali (I & II), Malaysia, Jakarta, and Mulgrave, Keysborough and Balmain from Australia competing. The Mulgrave Lions ran out comfortable victors over the Bali Geckos in the final by 44 points.

In 2005, the tournament was cancelled due to the second Bali bombings in Jimbaran and Kuta.

In 2004, in the area of the Thai-Burma railway at Kanchanaburi, the Thailand Tigers hosted the Malaysian Warriors on 24th April, then commemorated Anzac Day on 25th April. This Anzac Day match has since become an annual event and the teams have been honoured to have play in front of VIPs including ex-POW's from WWII. Hong Kong toured in 2006, and Thailand looks forward to hosting Bali in 2007.

The standard of Australian Rules football in Asia varies throughout the competition. Numerous former AFL, WAFL, SANFL and TFL players have played or currently play in Asia. In Japan and Indonesia, the game has successfully been developed with the locals. Further, the AFL Auskick program has taken off in numerous parts of Asia, most notably in Jakarta and Hong Kong.