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EXPAT NEWS

Vietnam Swans win first game at Asian Football Champs



Vietnam Swans in Shanghai. They won two games out of four in the Asian Championships. Melbourne Demon's Rohan Bail is in the red shirt on the right. Demons coach Dean Bailey is partly hidden in the middle.
 Photo: Michael Smith

By Michael Smith in Shanghai

The Vietnam Swans Australian football team won two games at the Australian Rules Football Asian Championships in Shanghai, China, on Saturday.

"It's the first time the Swannies have won a game at the Asian Championships, so it shows how much the club has developed," Phil Johns, the club president said in Shanghai.

The team of expat players mostly from Australia, who live in Vietnam, has been competing in the championships every year since 2007 without a win until they got up on Saturday.

A 24 strong squad plus coaches and supporters all met in China on Friday to get ready for the biggest competition of the year in Asian Football with expat teams from 12 countries across the region.

The Swan's victories were against a mixed team called the Barbarians and the team from Thailand.

In the morning the Swans were

beaten by the other two teams in their group, Singapore and Malaysia, but came back in the afternoon against the Barbarians after being a goal down at half time to win by a goal, then took control of the game against the Thailand Tigers.

"It's something that's been coming for four years. It's a good reward for training," said team captain Luke Creamer after the win.

The Swan's ruckman, David Hadley, said it was a great feeling to win two, after not winning any games in three previous championships.

Dubai won the final against Singapore to collect the cup. Vietnam Swans came seventh over all beating eighth placed Malaysia.

During the day, one of the team's coaches, Josh Little, presented a Swans number 44 jersey to Rohan Bail, a player from visiting AFL team, the Melbourne Demons, as a symbol of cooperation between the two teams.

The Demons were in the Chinese megacity to promote the sport to

China in an Exhibition Match on Sunday as part of the Australian World Expo program. The match which attracted 7000 was considered a huge success.

Bail said that he was overwhelmed when he knew there was a team in Vietnam that was throwing its support behind him and he and his team were glad that a jumper he had donated previously to the team had been used to raise money for the Tri Bob swimming program to stop kids from drowning in Hoi An.

Other AFL legends such as Paul Salmon, Brian Taylor, Paul Licuria and Steve Silvagni, who came to the Championships on Saturday to see what Asian football was all about, said they were very impressed by the play.

This year's championships were organized by the two clubs in China, Shanghai Tigers and Beijing Bombers.

The Swans president, Johns, said he wanted to hold the Championships in Vietnam in coming years as the support base was growing.