

A year in the life of a Swan

The Vietnam Swans head to Shanghai for the 11th Annual Asian Championships on October 16



In March 2010, AFL Superstars Nathan Buckley and Garry O'Donnell joined a Vietnam Swans footy clinic in Saigon. An Australian television crew was present filming a documentary to be screened on ANZAC Day.

Fast forward five weeks to April and the Vietnam Swans were at the Vung Tau Dog Racing Track to play the inaugural ANZAC Friendship Match. Under the banner of "Two black armbands; one bright future", the players acknowledged the sacrifice of all sides and celebrated Vietnam, 2010; such a vibrant, dynamic, welcoming country.

Fast forward three months to July. Eighteen Vietnam Swans were in the Harrison Room of the MCG (Melbourne Cricket Ground) as official guests of the Sydney Swans AFL Club. Also in attendance were Vietnam veterans who, back in 1968/69, played footy at the Vung Tau Dog Racing Track

(then known as the Lord Mayor's Oval). Also in attendance were Vietnamese Australians playing for the Southern Dragons. On the microphone, the Vietnam Swans spoke enthusiastically of playing footy in Vietnam and Asia.

Fast forward to last weekend when the 2010 AFL Grand Final replay was played at the MCG. In Vietnam the Swans celebrated by hosting AFL Grand Final parties in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The club also auctioned a footy jumper signed by Rohan Bail, a young player from the Melbourne AFL Club.

And now on October 16 the Vietnam Swans will play in the 11th Annual Asian Championships in Shanghai against 11 other countries. The following day, the AFL shall hold the Shanghai Showdown between Brisbane and Melbourne. As part of the programme, the Vietnam Swans will present our jumper to a young player from Melbourne... Rohan Bail. It's the links in the chain that makes the Vietnam Swans story so strong.

By Phil Johns

