

NSW RED v NSW WHITE (December 5-6, 2020)

Since the InterState Shield for 2020 was first postponed to December and then cancelled, the CNSW GC Selection Committee decided (prompted by a suggestion of Pete Landrebe) to organise an event that would provide team competition of similar intensity within the State, and offer some compensation for missing out on the ISS experience. We hoped that it would also help to sustain enthusiasm amongst players looking forward to the chance to take part in ISS 2021.

Newcastle National Park CC very generously offered to host the event, and Bev Smith to be the Tournament Referee. The Selection Committee aimed to form two closely-matched teams, drawn from the top 16 world-ranked available players in NSW. It was very encouraging to have almost 100% acceptance of offers to play. Pete Landrebe and Alison Sharpe agreed to captain Red and White respectively. Thanks also to Ron Johnstone, Brenda Wild and Georgina Carnegie for being available as reserves, and to Ron and Brenda for their refereeing.

The event, which was opened by the Federal MP for Newcastle, Sharon Claydon, was held in hot and humid weather, with storms threatening on the Saturday, but the sea breezes kept conditions manageable (and even a bit blustery on occasion). The Newcastle lawns were very well prepared and new balls were provided, and we greatly appreciated their club members' work in setting up and clearing the lawns each day, and their participation as spectators. Derek Bull and Pamela Barnwell kindly organised drinks and nibbles for the players' well-earned relaxation at the end of the event.

Two Tests were played on the successive days, with the same teams and format in each, essentially following the ISS pattern (4 doubles and 16 singles matches, each best of two games). The outcome of the first Test was just what we hoped for - the teams won 5 matches each, with the other 10 tied, and therefore won 20 games each. The deciding difference was one hoop in favour of the Red team. For the return Test there was an interesting experiment in doubles pairings, with Red trying novel combinations and White sticking with settled pairs. On this occasion at least, conservatism paid, giving White an early lead from the doubles, which held through to the final result.

It would be good to have feedback about the format in case we organise a similar event next year. For example, how many Tests, and should we re-arrange the players from one Test to the next?

Full results are available on Croquetscores. The teams were:-

NSW Red: Pete Landrebe, Rosie Landrebe, Chris Williamson, Kate McLoughlin, Peter Freer, Ros Johnstone, David Scott, Pauline Markwell.

NSW White: Alison Sharpe, John Levick, Gerda Lambeck, Rob Elliott, Liz Montague, Derek Bull, Pamela Barnwell, Peter Montague.

Notably, three players won 7 out of their 8 games: Pete Landrebe, Gerda Lambeck and Pamela Barnwell.

