

Veterans Report 2015-2016

The Committee in season 2015/2016 comprised:

President	Daryl Stephens
Secretary	Liz McLelland
Treasurer and Representative on RDCA Board	Chris Allan,
Results and MyCricket Manager	Ian Leach
VOSCA (O'60's) Representative	Chris Hartrup

Unfortunately our season again commenced in a similar vein to the previous two, with teams withdrawing after the draw had been completed. The loss of teams in both Divisions 2 and 3 caused us to again combine them in a 10 team division. Division 4 was left with 6 teams.

We had earlier taken steps to remedy the situation in Division 1 when there were only 4 competitive teams remaining. Fortunately, the BHRDCA were in an identical position due to teams leaving to establish the ECA Competition, so a composite Division 1 was formed from both associations.

The end result was that we had twenty Over 40's and six Over 50's teams compared to 2014-15's twenty six and seven, respectively.

Now, if this seems depressing, read on because "Every adversity carries with it the seed of equal or greater benefit" and players did enjoy the season served up to them.

Division 1 teams took up the challenge of the composite grading and enjoyed the challenge each match presented, whether playing against one of their "old RDCA rivals" or meeting new challengers from the BHRDCA. Ainslie Park and Croydon made the final four, with the Grand final between Mt Waverley and Croydon (two Sub District clubs). It was a quality, tense match with Croydon posting 176 and when Mt Waverley batted fortunes fluctuated but with some excellent final overs and two outstanding run outs Croydon won the day by 13 runs.

Most results in Division 2 were that of competitive games and that was further illustrated when before the final round there were 5 teams vying for 4th spot. The final was between Olinda and Mooroolbark with Olinda's strong batting line up being restricted to 4/178. Mooroolbark didn't start well, losing a couple of wickets and a batsman, retired hurt. Slowly a mid-innings partnership got them back on track but then with the loss of 3 quick wickets it seemed that Olinda would win successive premierships. Finally it got down to a dogged last wicket partnership and the last over with Mooroolbark needing 4 to win.....which they did.

Fourth Division is normally composed of club's second teams and this year there were four of them plus Bayswater Park and Croydon North. The three games after Christmas really shook up the ladder and in the final Croydon North met South Warrandyte, where the bowlers were on top, with each side only having 4 batsmen getting into double figures. Consequently fortunes fluctuated during the game. Croydon North were 5/73 but managed to score 8/150cc. The Hawks were coming off recent high scoring innings but were rocked to be 4/46 and then a crash to 7/57 and finally finishing 35 runs short. After missing from the competition for many years Croydon North once again claimed another pennant.

Our seven teams in the Over 50's acquitted themselves well with Ainslie Park, Ringwood East and Wonga Park all making Division 1 finals and Wonga Park uncharacteristically losing a final to the Canterbury team. Warrandyte made the finals in Division 2 but weren't able to repeat their premiership of the previous season.

This season marked a change to inter competition games usually played against FTGDCA and BHRDCA. At a joint meeting of these associations it was agreed to extend an invitation to the Diamond Valley Veterans to compete in a one day four corner competition for both over 40's and Over 50's. In the first round of both age groups we were drawn to play BHRDCA and needing to win to play off in the final, we unfortunately lost both. In the "losers" final both our teams had a win and enjoyed the chance to fraternise with players from the other three associations. Our Over 60's also played BHRDCA on that day and won but it was another year of failing to win back The Colonel's Cup.

There has already been a meeting of these associations to tweak some of the playing conditions and invitations have been made to two other associations to play in a similar event on December 11th 2016.

So in summary, from club, division and association level, veteran's cricket enjoyed another great year. Since its inception almost 30 years ago the concept of a separate cricket competition for those over 40 years of age has proved very popular. Over 50, Over 60 and now Over70 competitions are growing in numbers throughout Australia.

Veteran's Cricket is not meant to compete with Saturday competition, but rather to enable clubs to expand their club by retaining past players from both their own club and others who have moved into their area. Many clubs have veteran teams composed of "junior's fathers" and overall the club benefits from additional members, many of whom will support the club and possibly fill coaching or committee positions.

So why has the RDCA Veterans lost numbers over the past few years?

For the 20+ years I have been involved, teams have come and gone for a variety of reasons, but I feel the Senior Competition's introduction of modified rules, which has given players the option of playing the "same game" on a Saturday, has caused some clubs to withdraw the option of playing Sunday veterans.

The popularity of these modified rules is good for Saturday competition cricket and any increase in playing numbers is "good for cricket". I do understand the Club's position when their veteran team relies almost solely on competition players for their numbers. So to entertain the possibility of a veteran's team, the club executive should expect it to bring an overall benefit to the club of 12 -20 new members.

The Veterans Committee does have proactive plans to advertise locally for players over 40 years of age who want to play 7-9 games a season, every second Sunday, with players their own age and playing modified rules. A good response will enable us to refer new players to club's needing additional players and hopefully "real veteran" numbers increase to enable clubs to in the future consider re-entering a team in the veteran's competition.

In concluding this report , we are most appreciative of the senior executive, all club committees, team captains and managers, the Umpires Association and members of our own Veteran's committee who have all contributed to the enjoyment of Veteran's Cricket 2015 -16.

Daryl Stephens,

RDCA Veteran's President