Trans Tasman Report: Test 1.

The Trans Tasman Test Series (between Australia and New Zealand) is currently being held at the Wynnum Croquet Club in Brisbane, Queensland. The lawns are excellent, the members and volunteers both friendly and helpful, and the teams have been getting on marvellously.

The series is being played in the format of three 2-day tests, each consisting of 4 mixed doubles matches, and 8 singles matches - men play men and women play women. All matches are best-of-three, and one day is allocated to each match.

Test 1 started off well for Australia, winning three of their four doubles games in straight matches against - losing the fourth closely in 3 games. Players from both sides seemed to take a while to get used to the lawn-speeds and warm themselves into some good play, but most (of the Australians at least) put in good performances for day 1 on foreign courts.

Day two was more hotly contested, with the New Zealanders lifting their games and pushed most of the Australians in good competitive matches - Australia winning the day, 5 matches to 3, and the first Test 9 matches to 3. A great start for the Aussies, but the New Zealanders look like making it a good competitive series, and any lull in form from either side will no doubt be pounced upon by the opposing side.

Trans Tasman Report: Test 2.

If the First Test was a case of Australia getting off to a flying start in the doubles, followed by New Zealand making a valiant comeback and making it a real contest on the singles, the Second Test was the exact opposite.

On the first day, the Kiwis continued their upward form and took out three of the four doubles matches, putting the high-flying Australian team on the back foot. The NZ women put in particularly good performances, and this, I think, combined with a slight lapse in Australian concentration & confidence after NZ's rallying the day before, made the Second Test a very tight one. Thankfully for the Australians, the team was able to knuckle down and come back to win six of the eight singles matches (several going to a tight third game), and to take the Test, 7 games to 5, and thus the Series 2 Tests to 0, with one Test still to come.

Nevertheless, the New Zealanders put in a sterling effort, and could easily have won or drawn the Second Test. The Australians will certainly have to keep focusing their concentration to win the third test. With nothing to lose, I expect the New Zealanders to put up a very good fight.

Trans Tasman Report: Test 3.

On day 4, Australia had won the Series 2-0, but the New Zealanders were playing well, and with only a 7-5 loss in the Second Test, had the potential to take the Third and dash Australia’s hopes of running away with the Series 3-0.

As it turned out, the final Test was a long and arduous battle, despite the Aussies starting well. At the end of the doubles, the match score was 2 all (7 needed for a Test win), with 8 singles matches still to be contested, which kept the result in doubt until the very end.

As the final day progressed, Australia took a 6-4 lead, meaning that the Test would be at least a draw, but, with two matches to go, event management chose to dissuade players in one of the them from playing a 3rd game in a best of 3 – an odd decision, as a NZ victory in the one continuing match would have resulted in an AUS lead of 6-5, and an unresolved Third Test. Thankfully, Australian Alison Sharpe won the continuing match, to make it a 7-4 win, and 3-0 Series victory for Australia, a marvellous effort given the high quality of the NZ opposition.

Both the Australian and New Zealand teams faced difficulties both on and off court, but players showed real sportsmanship and unity to overcome all obstacles, and this, regardless of all else, made the Series a genuinely enjoyable one for all of the players.

Overall, Australia won with a match score of 3-0, winning 23 matches to 12, 52 games to 35, and 1658 hoops to 1356. Australian Malcolm Fletcher also took home the Player of the Series trophy, making it a resounding victory over our Trans Tasman friends.

Callum Hyland (Australian Team Manager)