

Vancouver - Harps - First Gaels to Play Aussie Rules Tournie:

02-Jun-2007: The Gaelic Football teams in Western Canada have a great friend in the Australian Rules Football teams of both Calgary & Vancouver. For years now, the Aussies have been fielding teams at Gaelic Football tournaments in both cities. They have become a fixture and seem to relish the chance to compete in our game (so much so that the Kangaroos actually & deservedly won the Calgary event in 2006, defeating the Western Canadian Champions & the tournament Hosts on the same day.)

To date, the Irish boys have taken advantage of the Australian desire for competition, but never paid the favour back. On Saturday, June 2nd, 2007, that changed.

The **Vancouver Harps** sent a team to compete at the Australian Rules Tournament in Kelowna, BC, and competed admirably in their first serious effort at this brand of football. The Calgary Bears, Calgary Kangaroos, Burnaby Eagles, Red Deer Magpies, and Vancouver Cougars were the other teams involved in a great day's footie played out in the sweltering heat (32 degrees Celsius) of the Okanagan.

The Harps played two games, losing to the experienced Calgary Canadians, but beating a tough Magpies outfit. Mike O'Dell played a great ruckman's role and Kevin Murray was his usual dependable self around half-back. The Australians were impressed to see how competitive the Irish lads were, that several of the Irish boys were snapped up to play more games than their original schedule had offered.

The Australians hope, now that the first step has been taken, that they will see other Gaelic Football teams follow suit and compete in Aussie Rules Tournaments in the coming years. As Troy Rose, Calgary Kangaroos Enigma & proud father of Dylan Elizabeth, put it, "Gaelic Football teams are always welcome at our tournie's."

The **Calgary Canadians** went on to defeat the Vancouver Canadians in the main Event, and the **Burnaby Eagles** had the bragging rights for the Australian contingent defeating both the Cougars and Kangaroos in some physical match-ups.

All the teams partied the night away in the playground of the Okanagan, and, though a fixture clash this summer will see the Cougars unable to partake in the Vancouver GAA Tournament, the Harps look forward to more AFL action in 2008.
