

Part 3: A New Age – 1980's and beyond

A down-turn in performance, both on and off the field, in the mid-1980s resulted in a brief power struggle, which saw the emergence of DW Rogers as an enlightened administrator; in quick succession, he recruited RA Watson as administration manager and DM Wellham as Tasmanian captain. The latter, in three seasons, restored Tasmanian playing performances to levels enjoyed in the early 1980s, and his de facto successor, Rod Tucker, was able to lead Tasmania to its first Shield final in 1994. David Boon and Jamie Cox emulated the feat in 1998 and 2002 respectively but success was not far at hand.

The relocation of cricket headquarters in 1987 to Bellerive Oval which underwent a transformation from a country sports field to the start of a developing boutique cricket venue co-incided with the beginning of the most successful and exciting phase of cricket since it was first played on in Hobart Town almost 170 years earlier.

Tasmania hosted its first Test match – Australia v Sri Lanka – at Bellerive Oval in December 1989.

In conjunction with the centralised control of cricket in Hobart, the TCA was corporatised, a Board of Directors elected and under Roger's astute chairmanship there was no looking back. Rogers subsequently served two terms as Chairman of the ACB (now Cricket Australia).

Administratively the game prospered with the development of improved playing and practice facilities, including indoor nets and the formal appointment of state coaches. Greg Shipperd (1991-2002), BA McFadyen (2002-05) and TC Coyle since 2005 have each had significant influence of team success and player development.

The war chest on display in the Cricket Museum now includes the Gillette Cup (1979), ING Cup (2005), Pura Cup/Sheffield Shield (2007) and Ford Ranger Cup (2010).

Apart from the success gained on the field by the Tasmanian Tigers as a team and individually by its players – many of whom have been honoured with national selection in Test, ODI and T20I teams – the Australian dressing room invariably sees Tasmanians in coaching, fitness support and selection roles.

In 2001, after several years of planning and community negotiations, the TCA undertook a major redevelopment at Bellerive Oval to further improve facilities and extend spectator capacity to accommodate 16 000 patrons. Modern electronic scoreboards and video replay screens were subsequently added. Then, eight years later in 2009 Bellerive Oval was lit up following the installation of four light towers to ensure Tasmanian cricket was able to facilitate the demands of television and international programming into the future. Tasmania's forefathers would be well pleased.

In keeping with marketing influences and the direction of Australian cricket, the Tasmanian Cricket Association was rebadged in 2009 as Cricket Tasmania.

Compiled by Michael Gandy