

COBRAS START FUTSAL NATIONALS IN COMMANDING STYLE Monday 9th January 2012

The home town ACT Cobras have kick-started the 2012 FFA National Futsal Championships with a convincing 8-2 hammering of plucky Tasmania at the AIS Arena. The hosts were in superb form in the opening stanza racing into a 6-1 lead by the interval. They didn't have it all their own way though as Jason O'Dwyer's early goal was cancelled out by a fine equaliser converted on the break by Joshua Quan. That setback stunned the Cobras into action and, after George Cattnach grabbed a quick-fire brace, the game was in their control. O'Dwyer netted his second before the half-time hooter and Trent Flanigan and Travis Dries added composed finishes as the ACT ran riot. The pace eased off in the second stanza, but there was still time for Daniel Fulton and Robbie Cattnach to extend the lead to 8-1 before a lackadaisical square pass from Fulton was seized upon by Andrew Clark for a late Tasmania consolation.

NSW Thunder and Victoria shared the honours in the opening match of the 33rd FFA National Futsal Championships in Canberra with their Grand Final re-match of 2011 ending all square at 1-1. The result would have been especially pleasing for Victoria who were edged out by their NSW counterparts in the big dance last year and did well to come from a goal down to grab a share of the spoils. In a tight match Chris Zeballos gave the Thunder a first-half lead when he tapped in from close range after excellent approach work from Tobias Seeto down the left flank. But Victoria fought back in the second half and equalised when Thunder's Miles Downie was caught dawdling in possession by Oner Simsek who robbed the NSW defender and poked the ball past the otherwise solid Gavin O'Brien.

NSW Lightning, who made the semi-finals last year, also began the competition with a draw as they ended their opening game with Southern NSW Flame 1-1. Gavin Schipp had the best chance of a goal less first half for the Lightning but after being denied by a fine save from the Flames' Lloyd Fermino in the first instance, then somehow contrived to miss an open goal, sliding the ball wide of the gaping net after Tim Simpson had drawn Fermino and slid Schipp in. Eventually Lightning found the breakthrough when Giacomo Di Mento lashed a long range effort into the net off the post but the lead was short lived as almost immediately Russel Crighton equalised for Southern NSW Flame to ensure honours ended even.

The final men's game of the opening day ended, like the majority, in a pulsating 1-1 draw as ACT Colts and Southern NSW couldn't be separated. For the majority of the match though it appeared as if the Colts would follow the lead of their Cobras stable-mates, particularly after Misko Naumoski was alert to follow up a David Dexter shot that crashed back off the woodwork to give his team the lead. The Colts were indebted to goalkeeper Kieran Stroh who produced a string of sensational saves to preserve his side's slender advantage. The ACT team held on until after the buzzer in the second half with Southern NSW handed a life-line with a free-shot from the 10-metre mark as time ran out which Peter Gaffney hammered high into the roof of the net much to the delight of his team mates.

OPEN MEN

Round 1

NSW Thunder 1 (Chris Zeballos) Victoria 1 (Oner Simek) Southern NSW Flame 1 (Russel Crighton) NSW Lightning 1 (Giacomo Di Mento) ACT Cobras 8 (George Cattnach (2), Jason O'Dwyer (2), Trent Flanigan, Travis Dries, Daniel Fulton,

Robbie Cattanach) Tasmania 2 (Joshua Quan, Andrew Clark) Southern NSW 1 (Peter Gaffney) ACT Colts 1 (Misko Naumoski)

TABLE

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	
1	ACT Cobras	1	1	0	0	8	2	+6	3	
2	ACT Colts	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	
3	NSW Lightning			1	0	1	0	1	0	2
4	NSW Thunder	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	
5	Southern NSW	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	
6	Southern NSW Flame	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2
7	Victoria	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	
8	Tasmania	1	0	0	1	2	8	-6	0	

3pts - WIN, 2pts - Score Draw, 1pt - No-Score Draw

LEADING SCORERS

2 George CATTANACH, Jason O'DWYER (ACT Cobras)

1 Robbie CATTANACH, Travis DRIES, Trent FLANIGAN, Daniel FULTON (ACT Cobras), Misko NAUMOSKI (ACT Colts), Giacomo DI MENTO (NSW Lightning), Chris ZEBALLOS (NSW Thunder), Peter GAFFNEY (Southern NSW), Russel CRIGHTON (Southern NSW Flame), Andrew CLARK, Joshua QUAN (Tasmania), Oner SIMSEK (Victoria)