

VICTORIAN COUNTRY VOLLEYBALL COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT ON BULK PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT

At the last conference in May, I was asked to further investigate the purchase, in bulk if necessary, of 'suitable' Volleyballs. The brands to be considered were:

1. Tachikara
2. Mikasa
3. Cheetah
4. Molten

The quality of 1 & 2 is unquestioned, with most, if not all, Associations having had experience in its use.

A Cheetah Volleyball was purchased, along with a Molten Volleyball. The two balls were placed into competition at Bendigo on 24/8/78. They were subjected to competition only, as far as could be controlled, in Mens and Womens grades from A to C reserve.

The Cheetah ball tended to have a 'lighter' feel, and was visually not of the same quality of the Molten. Most players found both balls good to play with. Both balls were synthetic leather, and were within the weight and dimensions of the rules specifications.

After approximately 160 hours playing time, the Cheetah developed a bulge in the seam, and within an hour, the bladder protruded through the outer casing. The Molten still maintained its shape, although the panels had begun to peel off in some cases. The test balls are presented for the inspection of delegates.

The cost of the Cheetah was \$13.40 plus freight, and that of the Molten, \$22.08, including freight. In my opinion, I believe the Cheetah to be an excellent training ball, and in a suitable price bracket for use by clubs and private teams. The price/performance ratio would be approximately the same for Cheetah and Molten.

I was unable to negotiate any better deals on Mikasa balls, than the \$31.50 ea. (April '78 prices) for 200 balls per annum. I seriously doubt that 200 balls at this price would be used in the whole State in a year. Retail price of the Mikasa is around \$43, but could be purchased from most sports stores for around \$35 - \$38.

The original quote on the top Tachikara was \$29.95 ea. (April '78 prices) in lots of 200 balls. The same comment on usage and retail price applies as for Mikasa. These deals were negotiated with the importers through a retail outlet, the only way either was prepared to deal. It was possible, however, to make some headway with the Tachikara supplier. I will cover this later, as the implications are complex.

The Cheetah ball is available in any quantity, and I have been able to obtain supplies 'free of tax', on the condition that I pay a 'personal cash cheque' over the counter as it were. If tax is added, then the price of this ball increases to around \$15.50. This is still a cheap ball in my opinion. However, the personal involvement places me in a rather invidious position.

As Secretary of the V.A.V.A., I was asked to negotiate with the importers of Tachikara for a State wide deal, as it appeared that merely a deal covering country area of the State was not succeeding. The firm is still unwilling to bypass retail outlets, as Volleyballs are only a very small part of their total business. The argument is that retail outlets could take away from the wholesaler, their total business if they were aware of direct deals on particular lines. I believe this is a fair argument.

When I finally met the manager over lunch, he remembered me from many years ago in a Y.M.C.A. club, of which the Bendigo and Ballarat branches had close and friendly ties. He offered me a personal account, and during discussion, the possibility arose of V.A..V.A., or V.C.V.C., or even an individual with credit approval, of setting up a registered business. This would be no different to another retail outlet, although the overheads should be much lower, allowing for a minimum mark-up which could be passed on to Associations, clubs, etc. This arrangement would also clearly overcome any objections of existing retail outlets.

Initially, I felt either V.C.V.C. or V.A.V.A. could set up this 'business', but after further consideration, a number of problems are imminent.

Firstly, what person in either body would be able to run a business in a voluntary capacity, maintain proper business records, handle tax returns, handle debtors and creditors accounts, etc.? Secondly, what guarantee could either body offer that the

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Firstly, what person in either body would be able to run a business in a voluntary capacity, maintain proper business records, handle tax returns, handle debtors and creditors accounts, etc.? Secondly, what guarantee could either body offer that the nominated person would be around in several years time, to provide some continuity to the management of the business? Office bearers can change every year, and this arrangement would not be encouraging for the wholesaler, and would not provide an efficient and continuing service to Associations, clubs, etc.

Another problem would face a voluntary office bearer in managing such a business. That is the storing of stock for supply to customers, and the ability to be able to provide packaging facilities for a range of goods in a private home.

The current range of goods handled by the V.C.V.C. includes Score sheets, Rule books, net markers and pockets, nets and now the possibility of Volleyballs. Future lines could include clothing, knee pads, Volleyball whistles, etc.

I regret to admit that I have un-intentionally painted myself into a corner in this bulk purchasing proposition. We are fast becoming suppliers of current lines to the whole of the State. I would argue against restricting supply to our own bodies, as part of our charter is to promote Volleyball in any way what-so-ever, and to deny supply to new Associations just forming, and interested individuals, would be a retrograde step in promoting the sport. The task has become very time consuming, and will get worse before it gets better.

I cannot therefore, add Volleyballs to the current stocks, especially with the degree of personal financial involvement as outlined above.

Clearly, a full time administrator for the V.A.V.A. could manage a business quite successfully, but this position cannot be considered for several years yet.

It is embarrassing to present the following proposition, as the charge of 'feathering ones own nest' can easily be levelled. I have chosen however, to lay the complete matter on the table to enable all possible discussion on the matter.

PROPOSITION:

That a private individual be supported by the V.C.V.C. and V.A.V.A. in setting up a registered business for the supply of Volleyball equipment to Associations and Clubs, or anyone else for that matter, on a flat mark up of 5% of list price, plus freight and handling charges. This business could handle all or part of the present V.C.V.C. supplies, as may be decided by this body. With this minimal mark-up, Clubs and Associations will still gain substantial benefits, and can expect prompt service, and the V.A.V.A./V.C.V.C. is freed of ever increasing involvement in the area.

On behalf of my wife, I hereby express personal interest in this proposition.

I am willing to listen to any other alternative, which will ensure continuing supply of the present lines, including Volleyballs, to Associations at substantially less cost than through existing retail outlets.

The proposition aside, I recommend the following as 'V.C.V.C' approved Volleyballs:-

1. Cheetah balls for training, club teams, etc.
2. Tachikara (Synthetic or ^{Lensky} ~~rubber~~) for competition, tournaments, etc.

The consideration of delegates is requested.

Murray Mansfield

V.C.V.C. Treasurer.

Footnote:

On recently ordering some nets from Oxley Bros., our adopted supplier appointed at the last conference, I found the price to have jumped from \$36.50 per unit net to \$55.00 per unit. This I feel is atrocious. International nets, with regulation mesh, plastic covered steel cable through the top and nylon cord through the bottom, and INCLUDING net marker pockets, could be supplied under the same terms as for the Tachikara volleyballs, for around \$42.00. These nets are made in England, and are of as good a quality as those from Oxley's. However, some decisions must be made before these nets can be supplied.