

**CONGRATULATIONS, CRAIG (SQUIRTER) LEACH.** On Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, with no fanfare, Craig ran onto the field at Marrara to play his 350<sup>th</sup> A Grade game for Palmerston Crocs. This must surely be a record for Northern Territory rugby, and a record for the Palmerston Club. See a summary on Page 2 of Squirter's outstanding career with the Crocs.

### This Week's Games:

**Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> June**

**Both teams play University**

**A Grade- 7.45pm Austar 2**

**B Grade- 6.15pm Austar 1**

#### A Grade Ladder

|            | P | W | D | L | Points |
|------------|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Casuarina  | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 42     |
| Dragons    | 9 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 19     |
| University | 9 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 17     |
| Souths     | 9 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 16     |
| Palmerston | 8 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 14     |

#### B Grade Ladder

|            | P  | W | D | L | Points |
|------------|----|---|---|---|--------|
| Palmerston | 9  | 7 | 0 | 2 | 33     |
| Dragons    | 10 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 29     |
| Casuarina  | 10 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 24     |
| Swampdogs  | 9  | 5 | 0 | 4 | 24     |
| Souths     | 10 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 23     |
| University | 8  | 2 | 0 | 6 | 12     |
| Jabiru     | 8  | 2 | 0 | 6 | 9      |

### Last Week's Games

#### **A GRADE GAME:**

From a very good B grade win, the Palmy A grade with a few backing up from B's played the reigning premiers, Casuarina.

We prepared very well and came out of the blocks after kick-off dealing out plenty of strong hit-ups, effectively starving the Cougars of backs' balls, and leaving their quick backs with hands on hips for the entire first half.

The butcher stripes scored two lucky tries in the first stanza with Palmy kicking two penalties, thanks to half-back, **Brock Evans**.

We let the pressure off a little in the second half, and allowed the cats to go wide to their strength and pace. This gave them a few easy tries, as we were caught out with overlaps on several occasions. Big trucking-it-up ball was the order of the day with all Crocs putting their hands up, and great support play as well.

A lack of bench support numbers caused us to fade out, so it would be good to correct that.

We finished our game with a strong try to outside centre, **Mika Isaako**, but we let in a few late seven pointers. Final score was 41-11. Players Player was **Robbie Armand**. Great games from **Jake Collins**, **Brock Evans**, **Jai Wyles-Kelly** and the front row of **Shane Cotton**, **Peter Richardson**,

**Chris Cooper and Charlie Chambers.**

A good effort all round.

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#### **B Grade Game:**

#### **The Armchair Critic reports:**

I believe we have seen the preview of the 2011 grand final for B grade. On the weekend we played Dragons in a tough game of passion and pride for a 17-12 win against top ladder Dragons.

From kick-off to the final whistle, it was anybody's game. Through sheer determination from the Palmy Crocs once again we proved the better side on the day.

Thanks to the A-graders who saw we didn't have enough planers to field a side and without any hesitation put on a number and hit the field. **You know who you are!**

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Palmy forwards need a pat on the back for the work they did around the paddock keeping Dragons off the ball and shutting them down before they spread the ball wide which we all know is Dragons only way of scoring tries against us.

The scrums were dominating from go to woe with old heads **Shane Cotton**, **Charlie Chambers** and **Richo** making the three key positions for the tight five for Palmy a **350kg plus** experienced front row. Dragons didn't have an answer for the scrum losses and I believe they lost several tight heads throughout the game. To their credit they tried every trick in the book to disrupt the Palmy scrum – to our credit and a new formula of keeping the niggling to a minimum, and using our shoulders to do the talking, it wasn't long until Dragons knew they were pushing up hill!

It wouldn't be Croc Tales without mentioning a few players who had a crack during the game, so let's start with **Shane Cotton**. This man has packed more scrums than I've had Pauls Iced Coffee (and that's a lot – I used to have 3 a day!). Shane was giving his opposite number such a hard time on several occasions, I thought someone was finishing off a wild pig in the middle of the scrum while we were trying to play a game of rugby. **Lachy** had an outstanding game once again and showed real determination and passion in everything he did on and off the field. **Stan Huen** put us in great attacking positions time after time with his 50m kicks for line. Unfortunately, he had to leave the field with a bad shoulder injury. The outside backs were tight in defence and put a lot of pressure on Dragons throughout the entire game with their back line moves.

All in all, for the first time this year for me it felt like we were playing rugby as a team. It felt like every player on the field was on the same page, looking after the bloke beside us, next to us and behind us. If we keep that up with some (kiss) style smart rugby we're looking at two flags in a row for the Killer B's.

Before signing out, I would like to thank the Palmy forwards for not getting sucked into the tit for tat style of rugby that Dragons seem to play against us. When we got kicked in the head, we said 'thank you'. When offered a blue,

we said 'no', and took the penalty. We stuck to our game plan and it paid off on the scoreboard where it counts. When we play like that the tight head for Dragons has nothing!

#### ARM CHAIR CRITIC SIGNING OFF

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### Junior Games

Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> June

|     |               |         |
|-----|---------------|---------|
| U17 | vs University | 9.00pm  |
| U15 | vs Dragons    | 8.00pm  |
| U13 | vs University | 7.00pm  |
| U11 | vs Dragons    | 6.00 pm |
| U9  | vs Casuarina  | 6.00pm  |

### Junior Ladder

|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| Under 17's | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Under 15's | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Under 13's | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| Under 11's | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
| Under 9's  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

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### JOTTINGS

For those of you who haven't been around the Club for the last 26 years, here is a condensed rugby history of **Craig 'Squirter' Leach**.

Born and bred in the Territory, he lived on Mt Ringwood station and started his rugby career at Brisbane Boys' College where he went to boarding school as a 12 year old.

Finishing Year 12, Craig returned to work in the NT and by then rugby had become his game of choice. With his brother, Cameron, he joined Palmerston Rugby Club in 1985, playing C grade.

Within no time though he was called up to A grade where he remained for most of the rest of his career.

At Palmerston in those days he can remember a massive forward pack who fed on small unsuspecting backs such as himself.

He was given the nickname of 'Squirter' by just such a forward, **Tony Morris**, who coined it because of Craig's skinny body. Craig says it was these large forwards who helped harness his skill of elusive running and fast release of the ball.

The half back in those days was his brother, Cameron, and the two soon formed a great partnership that lasted for almost 100 games.

In Craig's time at Palmerston he has won many awards:

A Grade Best & Fairest in 1996/97, and Best Back five times. He was awarded the Club's highest honour of **Life Member No. 10** in 2003.

Craig has played in all three of Palmerston's winning A Grade Grand Finals.

One of the biggest moments in his rugby career came in 1992 when he **captained** the Northern Territory representative side to an historic **17-16** win over Scotland at Rugby Park in Darwin in front of an ecstatic crowd of over 4000 rugby fans.

From 1992 to 1994, Craig moved south to try his hand at rugby in Sydney, playing for Eastern Suburbs. On returning to Darwin, he slotted back into the NT side and to play for Palmerston Crocs.

In 2000, when the Mosquitoes concept was born for the NT representative side, Craig was the first captain. He played 55 games for the NT between 1988 and 2001, including being captain during 1990 and 1992, and 1995-2000.

He remembers well when he was moved from his favourite #10 spot to inside centre against Queensland. His opposite opponent was **Tim Horan** who went on to make the inside centre position his own with the Wallabies for many years. It was a long day at the office for Craig to try to contain the running skills of Horan.



Craig is proud that he has played rugby in every state of Australia. He also represented the NT in the Under 20s's in Taiwan and captained the NT Mosquitoes in Sri Lanka.

He remembers well his battles with such greats as **Wylie Lingman**. He has made some great friends through his travels with rugby teams, lifelong friends through his years with the Crocs, and has some very memorable experiences. He counts playing NT representative rugby with his brother, Cameron, as one of his great thrills, as well as winning the game against Scotland.

The trend in recent years has seen many players changing clubs season to season. Squirter is proud of the fact that he can say his loyalty has always been with the Palmerston Crocs where he started his career and where he will finish it!

Whilst not admitting to hanging up his boots yet, he does have a life off the field. Married to Malinda, and with two little daughters, Jessie (5) and Maggie (2), living on a block at Holtze, and running his own business, he's kept very busy.

#### **Career Statistics:**

- . A Grade player 1985-2011
- . A Grade Palmerston Captain 1989-1992, & 1995-2002
- . 55 representative games for NT
- . Captain of NT team 1990-1992, 1995-1997, & 1999-2000
- . Kicked the winning penalty in Palmerston's 1<sup>st</sup> A Grade Grand Final win in 1990/91
- . Captain of the Palmerston A Grade Grand Final winning side – 1998/99
- . NT Player of the Year – 1996
- . Top Point Scorer NTRU A Grade Competitions – **three times**
- . Australian Sports Medal - 2000

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## **PALMERSTON CLUB SOCIAL CALENDAR**

9<sup>th</sup> July    Ladies Night  
16<sup>th</sup> July    Miss Palmy

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## **TRASH & TREASURE**

**PRUC CAR PARK  
SATURDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE  
8.30AM TO 12 NOON**

If you have something to sell, come along and have a stall.

**Cost \$5.00.**

**Looking for a bargain? Then this will be the place to be.**

**Sausage sizzle and drinks will be available.**

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## **State of Origin Night**

The **Grumpy Barman** would like to thank the nine people who turned up for the first State of Origin night at the Club. Although there was only a small crowd, it was a fun night. Unfortunately, due to the lack of numbers the Club will not be open for games two and three.

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